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ATHENS

ITS RISE AND FALL

WITH VIEWS OF THE

LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND SOCIAL LIFE

OF THE

ATHENIAN PEOPLE.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH," "RIENZI," &c.

VOL. I.

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LONDON

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1837.

DEDICATION.

TO HENRY FYNES CLINTON, ESQ., &c. &c.

AUTHOR OF "THE FASTI HELLENICI."

My dear Sir,

I am not more sensible of the distinction conferred upon me, when you allowed me to inscribe this History with your name, than pleased with an occasion to express my gratitude for the assistance I have derived throughout the progress of my labours, from that memorable work, in which you have upheld the celebrity of English learning, and afforded so imperishable a contribution to our knowledge of the Ancient World. To all who in History look for the true connexion between causes and effects, chronology is not a dry and mechanical compilation of barren dates, but the explanation of events, and the philosophy of facts. And the publication of the Fasti Hellenici has thrown upon those times, in which an accurate chronological system can best repair what is deficient, and best elucidate what is obscure in the scanty authorities bequeathed to us, all

the light of a profound and disciplined intellect, applying the acutest comprehension to the richest erudition, and arriving at its conclusions according to the true spirit of inductive reasoning, which proportions the completeness of the final discovery to the caution of the intermediate process. My obligations to that learning and to those gifts which you have exhibited to the world, are shared by all who in England, or in Europe, study the History, or cultivate the Literature, of Greece. But, in the patient kindness with which you have permitted me to consult you during the tedious passage of these volumes through the press—in the careful advice —in the generous encouragement—which have so often smoothed my path, and animated my progress—there are obligations peculiar to myself; and in those obligations there is so much that honours me, that were I to enlarge upon them more, the world might mistake an acknowledgement for a boast.

With the highest consideration and esteem,

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Most sincerely and gratefully yours,

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

London, March. 1837.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE historical work, a portion of which is now presented to the reader, has occupied me many years—though often interrupted in its progress—either by more active employment, or by literary undertakings of a character more seductive. These volumes were not only written, but actually in the hands of the publisher, before the appearance, and even, I believe, before the announcement, of the first volume of Mr. Thirlwall's History of Greece, or I might have declined going over any portion of the ground cultivated by that distinguished scholar.* As it is, however, the plan I have pursued differs materially from that of Mr. Thirlwall, and I trust that the soil is sufficiently fertile to yield a harvest to either labourer.

Since it is the letters, yet more than the arms or the institutions of Athens, which have rendered her illustrious, it is my object to combine an elaborate view of her literature, with a complete and impartial account of her political transactions. The two volumes now published bring the

* In their passage through the press, I have, however, had many opportunities to consult and refer to Mr. Thirlwall's able and careful work.

reader, in the one branch of my subject, to the supreme administration of Pericles; in the other, to a critical analysis of the tragedies of Sophocles. Two additional volumes will, I trust, be sufficient to accomplish my task, and close the records of Athens at that period when the annals of the world are merged into the chronicle of the Roman Empire. In these latter volumes, it is my intention to complete the history of the Athenian Drama—to include a survey of the Athenian Philosophy—to describe the Manners, Habits, and Social Life of the People, and to conclude the whole with such a review of the facts and events narrated, as may constitute, perhaps, an unprejudiced and intelligible explanation of the *causes* of the Rise and Fall of Athens.

As the history of the Greek Republics has been too often corruptly pressed into the service of heated political partisans, may I be pardoned the precaution of observing, that whatever my own political code, as applied to England, I have nowhere sought knowingly to pervert the lessons of the past to fugitive interests and party purposes. Whether led sometimes to censure, or more often to vindicate, the Athenian People, I am not conscious of any other desire than that of strict, faithful, impartial justice. Restlessly to seek among the ancient institutions for illustrations (rarely apposite) of the modern, is, indeed, to desert the character of a judge for that of an advocate, and to undertake the task of the historian, with the ambition of the pamphleteer. Though designing this work, not for colleges and cloisters, but for the general and miscellaneous public; it is nevertheless impossible to pass over in silence some matters which, if apparently trifling in themselves, have acquired dignity, and even interest, from brilliant speculations, or celebrated disputes. In the History of Greece, (and

Athenian history necessarily includes nearly all that is valuable in the annals of the whole Hellenic race,) the reader must submit to pass through much that is minute, much that is wearisome, if he desire to arrive at last at definite knowledge and comprehensive views. In order, however, to interrupt as little as possible the recital of events, I have endeavoured to confine to the earlier portion of the work, such details of an antiquarian or speculative nature, as while they may afford to the general reader, not indeed a minute analysis, but perhaps a sufficient notion, of the more important scholastic inquiries which have engaged the attention of some of the subtlest minds of Germany and England, may also prepare him the better to comprehend the peculiar character and circumstances of the people to whose history he is introduced: and it may be well to warn the more impatient, that it is not till the Second Book, (vol. i. p. 311,) that disquisition is abandoned for narrative. There yet remain various points, on which special comment would be incompatible with connected and popular history, but on which I propose to enlarge in a series of supplementary notes, to be appended to the concluding volume. These notes will also comprise criticisms and specimens of Grecian writers, not so intimately connected with the progress of *Athenian* literature, as to demand lengthened and elaborate notice in the body of the work. Thus, when it is completed, it is my hope that this Book will unite, with a full and complete History of Athens, Political and Moral, a more ample and comprehensive view of the treasures of the Greek literature than has yet been afforded to the English public. I have ventured on these remarks because I thought it due to the reader, no less than to myself, to explain the plan and outline of a design at present only partially developed.

London, March, 1837.

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BOOK I.

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE LEGISLATION OF SOLON, B.C. —— TO B.C. 594.

ATHENS;

ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

SITUATION AND SOIL OF ATTICA—THE PELASGIANS ITS EARLIEST INHABITANTS—THEIR RACE AND LANGUAGE AKIN TO THE GRECIAN—THEIR VARYING CIVILISATION AND ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS—CECROPS—WERE THE EARLIEST CIVILIZERS OF GREECE FOREIGNERS OR GREEKS?—THE FOUNDATION OF ATHENS—THE IMPROVEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CECROPS—THE RELIGION OF THE GREEKS CANNOT BE REDUCED TO A SINGLE SYSTEM—ITS INFLUENCE UPON THEIR CHARACTER AND MORALS, ARTS AND POETRY—THE ORIGIN OF SLAVERY AND ARISTOCRACY.

I. To vindicate the memory of the Athenian people, without disguising the errors of Athenian Institutions;—and, in narrating alike the triumphs and the reverses—the grandeur and

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the decay—of the most eminent of Ancient States, to record the causes of her imperishable influence on mankind not alone in Political Change or the fortunes of fluctuating War, but in the Arts, the Letters, and the Social Habits, which are equal elements in the history of a People;—this is the object that I set before me;—not unreconciled to the toil of years, if, serving to divest of some party errors, and to diffuse through a wider circle, such knowledge as is yet bequeathed to us of a time and land, fertile in august examples and in solemn warnings—consecrated by undying names and memorable deeds.

II. In that part of earth termed by the Greeks Hellas, and by the Romans Græcia,* a small

* The passage in Aristotle, (Meteorol. l. 1. c. 14,) in which, speaking of the ancient Hellas, (the country about Dodona and the River Achelous,) the author says it was inhabited by a people (along with the Helli, or Selli) then called Græci, now Hellenes, (τοτε μεν Γραικοι, νυν δε Ελληνες) is well-known. The Greek chronicle on the Arundel marbles asserts, that the Greeks were called Græci before they were called Hellenes; in fact, Græci was most probably once a name for the Pelasgi, or for a powerful, perhaps predominant, tribe of the Pelasgi widely extended along the western coast—by them the name was borne into Italy, and (used indiscriminately with that of Pelasgi) gave the Latin appellation to the Hellenic or Grecian people.

tract of land known by the name of Attica extends into the Ægæan sea—the south-east peninsula of Greece. In its greatest length it is about sixty, in its greatest breadth about twenty-four, geographical miles. In shape it is a rude triangle,—on two sides flows the sea —on the third, the mountain range of Parnes and Cithæron, divides the Attic from the Bœotian territory. It is intersected by frequent but not lofty hills, and compared with the rest of Greece, its soil, though propitious to the growth of the olive, is not fertile or abundant. In spite of painful and elaborate culture, the traces of which are yet visible, it never produced a sufficiency of corn to supply its population; and this, the comparative sterility of the land, may be ranked among the causes which conduced to the greatness of the people. The principal mountains of Attica are, the Cape of Sunium, Hymettus renowned for its honey, and Pentelicus for its marble; the principal streams which water the valleys are the capricious and uncertain rivulets of Cephisus and Ilissus,*—streams break-

* Modern Travellers, in their eloquent lamentations over the now niggard waters of these immortal streams, appear to forget that Strabo expressly informs us that the Cephisus flowed in the manner of a torrent, and failed altogether in the summer. "Much the same," he adds, "was the Ilissus." A

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ing into lesser brooks, deliciously pure and clear. The air is serene—the climate healthful —the seasons temperate. Along the hills yet breathe the wild thyme and the odorous plants which, every where prodigal in Greece, are more especially fragrant in that lucid sky;—and still the atmosphere colours with peculiar and various tints the marble of the existent temples, and the face of the mountain landscapes.

III. I reject at once all attempt to penetrate an unfathomable obscurity for an idle object. I do not pause to inquire whether, after the destruction of Babel, Javan was the first settler in Attica, nor is it reserved for my labours to decide the solemn controversy whether Ogyges was the cotemporary of Jacob or of Moses. Neither shall I suffer myself to be seduced into any lengthened consideration of those disputes, so curious and so inconclusive, relative to the origin of the Pelasgi, (according to Herodotus the earliest inhabitants of Attica,) which have vainly agitated the learned. It may amuse the antiquary to weigh gravely the several doubts as to the derivation of their name from Pelasgus or from Peleg—to connect the scattered fragments of tradition—and to interpret

deficiency of water was always a principal grievance in Attica, as we may learn from the laws of Solon relative to wells.

either into history or mythology the language of fabulous genealogies. But our subtlest hypotheses can erect only a fabric of doubt, which, while it is tempting to assault, it is useless to defend. All that it seems to me necessary to say of the Pelasgi is as follows:—They are the earliest race which appear to have exercised a dominant power in Greece. Their kings can be traced by tradition to a time long prior to the recorded genealogy of any other tribe, and Inachus, the father of the Pelasgian Phoroneus, is but another name for the remotest æra to which Grecian chronology can ascend.* Whether the Pelasgi were anciently a Foreign or a Grecian tribe,† has been a subject of constant and celebrated discussion. Herodotus, speaking of some settlements held to be Pelasgic, and existing in his time, terms their language "barbarous;" but Müller, nor with argument

* Platon. Timæus. Clinton's Fasti Hellenici, vol. i. p. 5.

† According to some they were from India, to others from Egypt, to others again from Phœnicia. They have been *systematized* into Bactrians, and Scythians, and Philistines—into Goths, and into Celts; and tracked by investigations as ingenious as they are futile, beyond the banks of the Danube to their settlements in the Peloponnese. No erudition and no speculation can, however, succeed in proving their existence in any part of the world *prior* to their appearance in Greece.

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insufficient, considers that the expression of the historian would apply only to a peculiar dialect; and the hypothesis is sustained by another passage in Herodotus, in which he applies to certain Ionian dialects the same term as that with which he stigmatizes the language of the Pelasgic settlements. In corroboration of Müller's opinion we may also observe, that the "barbarous tongued" is an epithet applied by Homer to the Carians, and is rightly construed by the ancient critics as denoting a dialect mingled and unpolished, certainly not foreign. Nor when the Agamemnon of Sophocles upbraids Teucer with "his barbarous tongue,"* would any scholar suppose that Teucer is upbraided with not speaking Greek; he is upbraided with speaking Greek inelegantly and rudely. It is clear that they who continued with the least adulteration a language in its earliest form, would seem to utter a strange and unfamiliar jargon to ears accustomed to its more modern construction. And, no doubt, could we meet with a tribe retaining the English of the thirteenth century, the language of our ancestors would be to most of us unintelligible, and seem to many of us foreign. But, however the phrase of Herodotus be interpreted, it would still be exceedingly doubtful

* Sophoc. Ajax, 1251.

whether the settlements he refers to were really and originally Pelasgic, and still more doubtful whether, if Pelasgic, they had continued unalloyed and uncorrupted their ancestral language. I do not, therefore, attach any importance to the expression of Herodotus. I incline, on the contrary, to believe, with the more eminent of English scholars, that the language of the Pelasgi contained at least the elements of that which we acknowledge as the Greek ;—and from many arguments I select the following :

1st. Because in the states which we know to have been peopled by the Pelasgi, (as Arcadia, and Attica,) and whence the population were not expelled by new tribes, the language appears no less Greek than that of those states from which the Pelasgi were the earliest driven. Had they spoken a totally different tongue from later settlers, I conceive that some unequivocal vestiges of the difference would have been visible even to the historical times.

2ndly. Because the Hellenes are described as few at first—their progress is slow—they subdue, but they do not extirpate ; in such conquests—the conquests of the few settled amongst the many—the language of the many continues to the last ; that of the few would influence, enrich, or corrupt, but never destroy it.

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3rdly. Because whatever of the Grecian language pervades the Latin,* we can only ascribe to the Pelasgic colonizers of Italy. In this, all ancient writers, Greek and Latin, are agreed. The few words transmitted to us as Pelasgic betray the Grecian features, and the Lamina Borgiana (now in the Borgian collection of Naples, and discovered in 1783) has an inscription relative to the Siculi or Sicani, a people expelled from their Italian settlements before any received date of the Trojan war, of which the character is Pelasgic—the language Greek.

IV. Of the moral state of the Pelasgi our accounts are imperfect and contradictory. They were not a petty horde, but a vast race, doubtless divided, like every migratory people, into numerous tribes differing in rank, in civilisation,† and in many peculiarities of character. The Pelasgi in one country might appear as herdsmen, or as savages; in another, in the same age, they might appear collected into

* All those words (in the Latin) which make the foundation of a language, expressive of the wants or simple relations of life, are almost literally Greek—such as *pater*, *frater*, *aratrum*, *bos*, *ager*, &c. For the derivation of the Latin from the Æolic dialect of Greece, see "Scheid's Prolegomena to Lennep's Etymologicon Linguæ Græcæ."

† The Leleges, Dryopes, and most of the other hordes, pre-

cities and cultivating the arts. The history of the East informs us with what astonishing rapidity a wandering tribe, once settled, grew into fame and power; the camp of to-day—the city of to-morrow,—and the 'dwellers in the wilderness setting up the towers and the palaces thereof.'* Thus while in Greece this mysterious people are often represented as the aboriginal race, receiving from Phœnician and Egyptian settlers the primitive blessings of social life; in Italy

valent in Greece, with the Pelasgi, I consider, with Mr. Clinton, but as tribes belonging to the great Pelasgic family. One tribe would evidently become more civilized than the rest in proportion to the social state of the lands through which it migrated—its reception of strangers from the more advanced East—or according as the circumstances of the soil in which it fixed its abode stimulated it to industry, or forced it to invention. The tradition relative to Pelasgus, that while it asserts him to have been the first that dwelt in Arcadia, declares also that he first taught men to build huts, wear garments of skins, and exchange the yet less nutritious food of herbs and roots for the sweet and palatable acorns of the "*fagus*," justly puzzled Pausanias. Such traditions, if they prove *any thing*, which I more than doubt, tend to prove that the tribe personified by the word "Pelasgus," migrated into that very Arcadia alledged to have been their aboriginal home, and taught their own rude arts to the yet less cultivated population they found there.

* See Isaiah xxiii.

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we behold them the improvers in agriculture* and the first teachers of letters.†

Even so early as the traditional appearance of Cecrops amongst the savages of Attica, the Pelasgians in Arcadia had probably advanced from the pastoral to the civil life; and this, indeed, is the date assigned by Pausanias to the foundation of that ancestral Lycosura, in whose rude remains (by the living fountain and the waving oaks of the modern Diaphorte) the antiquary yet traces the fortifications of "the first city which the sun beheld." ‡ It is in their buildings that the

* The received account of the agricultural skill of the Pelasgi is tolerably well supported. Dionysius tells us that the Aboriginals having assigned to those Pelasgi, whom the Oracle sent from Dodona into Italy, the marshy and unprofitable land called Velia, they soon drained the fen:—their love of husbandry contributed, no doubt, to form the peculiar character of their civilisation and religion.

† Solinus and Pliny state that the Pelasgi first brought letters into Italy. Long the leading race of Italy, their power declined, according to Dionysius, two generations before the Trojan war.

‡ Paus. Arcad. c. xxxviii. In a previous chapter, (II.) that accomplished antiquary observes, that it appeared to him that Cecrops and Lycaon (son of Pelasgus and founder of Lycosura) were contemporaries. By the strong and exaggerating expression of Pausanias quoted in the text, we must

Pelasgi have left the most indisputable record of their name. Their hand-writing is yet upon their walls! A restless and various people—over-running the whole of Greece, found northward in Dacia, Illyria, and the country of the Getæ, colonizing the coasts of Ionia, and long the master-race of the fairest lands of Italy,—they have passed away amidst the revolutions of the elder earth, their ancestry and their descendants alike unknown;—yet not indeed the last, if my conclusions are

suppose, not that he considered Lycosura the first town of the earth, but the first walled and fortified city. The sons of Lycaon were great builders of cities, and in their time rapid strides in civilisation appear by tradition to have been made in the Peloponnesus. The Pelasgic architecture is often confounded with the Cyclopean. The Pelasgic masonry is polygonal, each stone fitting into the other without cement; that called the Cyclopean, and described by Pausanias, is utterly different, being composed by immense blocks of stone, with small pebbles inserted in the interstices. (See Gell's Topography of Rome and its Vicinity.) By some antiquaries, who have not made the mistake of confounding these distinct orders of architecture, the Cyclopean has been deemed more ancient than the Pelasgic,—but this also is an error. Lycosura was walled by the Pelasgians between four and five centuries prior to the introduction of the Cyclopean masonry—in the building of the city of Tiryns. Sir William Gell maintains the possibility of tracing the walls of Lycosura near the place now called Surias To Kastro.

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rightly drawn : if the primitive population of Greece—themselves Greek—founding the language, and kindred with the blood, of the later and more illustrious Hellenes—they still made the great bulk of the people in the various states, and through their most dazzling age : Enslaved in Laconia—but free in Athens—it was their posterity that fought the Mede at Marathon and Platæa,—whom Miltiades led,—for whom Solon legislated,—for whom Plato thought,—whom Demosthenes harangued. Not less in Italy than in Greece the parents of an imperishable tongue, and, in part, the progenitors of a glorious race, we may still find the dim track of their existence wherever the classic civilisation flourished,—the classic genius breathed. If in the Latin, if in the Grecian tongue, are yet the indelible traces of the language of the Pelasgi, the literature of the Ancient, almost of the Modern World, is their true descendant!

V. Despite a vague belief (referred to by Plato) of a remote and perished æra of civilisation, the most popular tradition asserts the Pelasgic inhabitants of Attica to have been sunk into the deepest ignorance of the elements of social life, when, either from Sais, an Egyptian city, as is commonly supposed, or from Sais a province in Upper Egypt, an Egyptian cha-

racterised to posterity by the name of Cecrops is said to have passed into Attica with a band of adventurous emigrants. BOOK I. CHAP. I.

The tradition of this Egyptian immigration into Attica was long implicitly received. Recently the bold scepticism of German scholars—always erudite—if sometimes rash—has sufficed to convince us of the danger we incur in drawing historical conclusions from times to which no historical researches can ascend. The proofs upon which rest the reputed arrival of Egyptian colonizers, under Cecrops, in Attica, have been shown to be slender—the authorities for the assertion to be comparatively modern—the arguments against the probability of such an immigration in such an age, to be at least plausible and important. Not satisfied, however, with reducing to the uncertainty of conjecture what incautiously had been acknowledged as fact, the assailants of the Egyptian origin of Cecrops presume too much upon their victory, when they demand us to accept as a counter *fact*, what can be, after all, but a counter conjecture. To me, impartially weighing the arguments and assertions on either side, the popular tradition of Cecrops and his colony appears one that can neither be tacitly accepted as history, nor contemptuously dismissed as invention. It

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would be, however, a frivolous dispute whether Cecrops were Egyptian or Attican, since no erudition can ascertain that Cecrops ever existed, were it not connected with a controversy of some philosophical importance, viz. whether the early civilizers of Greece were foreigners or Greeks, and whether the Egyptians more especially assisted to instruct the ancestors of a race that have become the teachers and models of the world,—in the elements of religion, of polity, and the arts.

Without entering into vain and futile reasonings, derived from the scattered passages of some early writers, from the ambiguous silence of others—and above all, from the dreams of etymological analogy or mythological fable, I believe the earliest civilizers of Greece, to have been foreign settlers; deducing my belief from the observations of common sense rather than from obscure and unsatisfactory research. I believe it;

First—Because, what is more probable than that at very early periods the more advanced nations of the East obtained communication with the Grecian continent and isles? What more probable than that the maritime and roving Phœnicians entered the seas of Greece, and were tempted by the plains

which promised abundance, and the mountains which afforded a fastness? Possessed of a superior civilisation to the hordes they found, they would meet rather with veneration than resistance, and thus a settlement would be obtained by an inconsiderable number, more in right of intelligence than of conquest.

But, though this may be conceded with respect to the Phœnicians, it is asserted that the Egyptians at least were not a maritime or colonizing people: and, we are gravely assured, that in those distant times no Egyptian vessel had entered the Grecian seas. But, of the remotest ages of Egyptian civilisation we know but little. On their earliest monuments (now their books!) we find depicted naval as well as military battles, in which the vessels are evidently those employed *at sea*. According to their own traditions they colonized in a remote age. They themselves laid claim to Danaus: and, the mythus of the expedition of Osiris, is not improbably construed into a figurative representation of the spread of Egyptian civilisation by the means of colonies. Besides, Egypt was subjected to more than one revolution, by which a large portion of her population was expelled the land, and scattered over the neighbouring

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regions.* And even granting that Egyptians fitted out no maritime expedition—they could easily have transplanted themselves in Phœnician vessels, or Grecian rafts—from Asia into Greece. Nor can we forget that Egypt† for a time was the habitation, and Thebes the dominion, of the Phœnicians, and that hence perhaps the origin of the dispute whether certain of the first foreign civilizers of Greece were Phœnicians or Egyptians: The settlers might come from Egypt, and be by extraction Phœni-

* The expulsion of the Hyksos, which was not accomplished by one sudden, but by repeated revolutions, caused many migrations; amongst others, according to the Egyptians, that of Danaus.

† The Egyptian monarchs, in a later age, employed the Phœnicians in long and adventurous maritime undertakings. At a comparatively recent date, Neco, King of Egypt, dispatched certain Phœnicians on no less an enterprise than that of the circumnavigation of Africa.[1] That monarch was indeed fitted for great designs. The Mediterranean and the Red Sea already received his fleets, and he had attempted to unite them by a canal which would have rendered Africa an island.[2]

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[1] Herod. iv. 42. Rennell. Geog. of Herod.

[2] Herod. ii. 158, 159. Heeren. Phœnicians, c. iii. See also Diodorus.

cians; or Egyptian emigrators might well have accompanied the Phœnician.*

2ndly. By the evidence of all history, savage tribes appear to owe their first enlightenment to foreigners:—to be civilized, they conquer or are conquered—visit or are visited. For a fact which contains so striking a mystery, I do not attempt to account. I find in the history of every other part of the world, that it is by the colonizer or the conqueror that a tribe neither colonizing nor conquering is redeemed from a savage state, and I do not reject so probable an hypothesis for Greece.

3rdly. I look to the various arguments of a local or special nature, by which these general probabilities may be supported, and I find them unusually strong. I cast my eyes on the map

* The general habits of a people can in no age preclude exceptions in individuals. Indian rajahs do not usually travel, but we had an Indian rajah for some years in the Regent's Park; the Chinese are not in the habit of visiting England, but a short time ago some Chinese were in London. Grant that Phœnicians had intercourse with Egypt and with Greece, and nothing can be less improbable than that a Phœnician vessel may have contained some Egyptian adventurers. They might certainly be men of low rank and desperate fortunes—they might be fugitives from the law—but they might not the less have seemed princes and sages to a horde of Pelasgic savages.

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of Greece, and I see that it is almost invariably on the eastern side that these eastern colonies are said to have been founded: I turn to chronology, and I find the revolutions in the East coincide in point of accredited date with the traditional immigrations into Greece: I look to the history of the Greeks, and I find the Greeks themselves, (a people, above all others, vain of aboriginal descent, and contemptuous of foreign races,) agreed in according a general belief to the accounts of their obligations to foreign settlers: and, therefore, (without additional but doubtful arguments from any imaginary traces of Eastern, Egyptian, Phœnician rites and fables in the religion or the legends of Greece in her remoter age,) I see sufficient ground for inclining to the less modern, but more popular belief, which ascribes a foreign extraction to the early civilizers of Greece: nor am I convinced by the reasonings of those who exclude the Egyptians from the list of these primitive benefactors.

It being conceded that no hypothesis is more probable than that the earliest civilizers of Greece were foreign, and might be Egyptian, I do not recognise sufficient authority for rejecting the Attic traditions claiming Egyptian civilizers for the Attic soil, in arguments, whether grounded upon the fact that such traditions, un-

referred to by the more ancient, were collected by the more modern, of Grecian writers—or upon plausible surmises as to the habits of the Egyptians in that early age. Whether Cecrops were the first—whether he were even one—of these civilizers, is a dispute unworthy of philosophical inquirers.* But as to the time of Cecrops are referred, both by those who contend for his Egyptian, and those who assert his Attic origin, certain advances from barbarism, and certain innovations in custom, which would have been natural to a foreigner, and almost miraculous in a native, I doubt whether it would not be our wiser and more cautious policy to leave undisturbed a long accredited conjecture, rather than to subscribe to arguments which, however startling and ingenious, not only substitute no unanswerable hypothesis, but conduce to no important result.†

* The authorities in favour of the Egyptian origin of Cecrops are—Diod. lib. i.; Theopomp.; Schol. Aristoph.; Plut.; Suidas. Plato speaks of the ancient connexion between Sais and Athens. Solon finds the names of Erechtheus and Cecrops in Egypt, according to the same authority, I grant a doubtful one (Plat. Critias.) The best positive authority of which I am aware in favour of the contrary supposition that Cecrops was indigenous, is Apollodorus.

† To enter into all the arguments that have been urged

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VI. If Cecrops were really the leader of an Egyptian Colony, it is more than probable that he obtained the possession of Attica by other means than those of force. To savage and barbarous tribes, the first appearance of men, whose mechanical inventions, whose superior knowledge of the arts of life—nay, whose exterior advantages of garb and mien* indicate intellectual eminence, till then neither known nor imagined, presents a something preternatural and divine. The imagination of the wild inhabitants is seduced, their superstitions aroused, and they yield to a teacher—not succumb to an invader. It was probably thus, then, that Cecrops, with his colonists, would have occupied the Attic plain—conciliated rather than subdued the inhabitants, and united in himself the twofold authority exercised by primeval chiefs—the dignity of the legislator,

on either side relative to Cecrops would occupy about two hundred pages of this work, and still leave the question in dispute. Perhaps two hundred pages might be devoted to subjects more generally instructive!

* So, in the Peruvian traditions, the apparition of two persons of majestic form, and graceful garments, appearing alone and unarmed on the margin of the Lake Titiaca, sufficed to reclaim a naked and wretched horde from their savage life, to inculcate the elements of the social union, and to collect a people in establishing a throne.

and the sanctity of the priest. It is evident that none of the foreign settlers brought with them a numerous band. The traditions speak of them with gratitude as civilizers, not with hatred as conquerors. And they did not leave any traces in the establishment of their language:—a proof of the paucity of their numbers, and the gentle nature of their influence—the Phœnician Cadmus, the Egyptian Cecrops, the Phrygian Pelops, introduced no separate and alien tongue. Assisting to civilize the Greeks, they then became Greeks; their posterity merged and lost amidst the native population.

VII. Perhaps in all countries, the first step to social improvement is in the institution of marriage, and the second is the formation of cities. As Menes in Egypt, as Fohi in China, so Cecrops at Athens is said first to have reduced into sacred limits the irregular intercourse of the sexes,* and reclaimed his barbarous subjects from a wandering and unprovidential life, subsisting on the spontaneous produce of no abundant soil. High above the

* "Like the Greeks," says Herodotus, (book ii. c. 112,) "the Egyptians confine themselves to one wife." Latterly, this among the Greeks, though a common, was not an invariable, restraint; but more on this hereafter.

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plain, and fronting the sea, which, about three miles distant on that side, sweeps into a bay peculiarly adapted for the maritime enterprises of an earlier age, we still behold a cragged and nearly perpendicular rock. In length its superficies is about eight hundred, in breadth about four hundred, feet.* Below, on either side, flow the immortal streams of the Ilissus and Cephisus. From its summit you may survey, here, the mountains of Hymettus, Pentelicus, and, far away, "the silver bearing Lauriuin;" below, the wide plain of Attica, broken by rocky hills—there, the islands of Salamis and Ægina, with the opposite shores of Argolis, rising above the waters of the Saronic Bay. On this rock the supposed Egyptian is said to have built a fortress, and founded a city;† the fortress was in later times styled the Acropolis, and the place itself, when the buildings of Athens spread far and wide beneath its base, was still designated πόλις, or the CITY. By degrees we are told that he extended, from this impregnable castle and its adjacent plain, the limit of his realm, until it included the whole of Attica, and

* Hobhouse's Travels, Letter 23.

† It is by no means probable that this city, despite its fortress, was walled like Lycosura.

perhaps Bœotia.* It is also related that he established eleven other towns or hamlets, and divided his people into twelve tribes, to each of which one of the towns was apportioned—a fortress against foreign invasion, and a court of justice in civil disputes.

If we may trust to the glimmering light which, resting for a moment, uncertain and confused, upon the reign of Cecrops, is swallowed up in all the darkness of fable during those of his reputed successors,—it is to this apocryphal personage that we must refer the elements both of agriculture and law. He is said to have instructed the Athenians to till the land, and to watch the produce of the seasons; to have imported from Egypt the olive-tree, for which the Attic soil was afterwards so celebrated, and even to have navigated to Sicily and to Africa for supplies of corn. That such advances, from a primitive and savage state, were not made in a single generation, is sufficiently clear. With more

* At least Strabo assigns Bœotia to the government of Cecrops. But I confess, that so far from his incorporating Bœotia with Attica, I think that traditions relative to his immediate successors appear to indicate that Attica itself continued to retain independent tribes—soon ripening, if not already advanced, to independent states.

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probability, Cecrops is reputed to have imposed upon the ignorance of his subjects and the license of his followers, the curb of impartial law, and to have founded a tribunal of justice, (doubtless the sole one for all disputes,) in which after-times imagined to trace the origin of the solemn Areopagus.

VIII. Passing from these doubtful speculations on the detailed improvements effected by Cecrops, in the social life of the Attic people, I shall enter now into some examination of two subjects far more important. The first is the Religion of the Athenians in common with the rest of Greece; and the second the origin of the Institution of Slavery.

The origin of Religion in all countries is an inquiry of the deepest interest, and of the vaguest result. For, the desire of the pious to trace throughout all creeds the principles of the one they themselves profess—the vanity of the learned to display a various and recondite erudition—the passion of the ingenious to harmonize conflicting traditions—and the ambition of every speculator to say something new upon an ancient but inexhaustible subject, so far from enlightening, only perplex, our conjectures. Scarcely is the theory of to-day established, than the theory of to-morrow is invented to oppose

it. With one the religion of the Greeks is but a type of the mysteries of the Jews, the event of the Deluge, and the preservation of the Ark; with another it is as entirely an incorporation of the metaphysical solemnities of the Egyptian; —now it is the crafty device of priests, now the wise invention of sages. It is not too much to say, that after the profoundest labours and the most plausible conjectures of modern times, we remain yet more uncertain and confused than we were before. It is the dark boast of every pagan mythology, as of one of the eldest of the pagan deities, that "none among mortals hath lifted up its veil!"

After, then, some brief and preliminary remarks, tending to such hypotheses as appear to me most probable and simple, I shall hasten from unprofitable researches into the Unknown, to useful deductions from what is given to our survey—in a word, from the origin of the Grecian religion to its influence and its effects; the first is the province of the antiquary and the speculator; the last of the historian and the practical philosopher.

IX. When Herodotus informs us that Egypt imparted to Greece the names of almost all her deities; and that his researches convinced him that they were of barbarous origin, he exempts

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from the list of the Egyptian deities, Neptune, the Dioscuri, Juno, Vesta, Themis, the Graces, and the Nereids.* From Africa, according to Herodotus, came Neptune, from the Pelasgi the rest of the deities disclaimed by Egypt. According to the same authority, the Pelasgi learned not their deities, but the names of their deities, (and those at a late period,) from the Egyptians.† But the Pelasgi were the first known inhabitants of Greece—the first known inhabitants of Greece had therefore their especial deities, before any communication with Egypt. For the rest we must accept the account of the simple and credulous Herodotus, with considerable caution and reserve. Nothing is more natural—perhaps more certain—than that every tribe,‡ even of utter savages, will invent

* Herod. ii. c. l. † Ibid. ii. c. liii.

‡ That all the Pelasgi—scattered throughout Greece, divided amongst themselves—frequently at war with each other, and certainly in no habits of peaceful communication—each tribe of different modes of life, and different degrees of civilisation, should have concurred in giving no names to their gods, and then have equally concurred in receiving names from Egypt, is an assertion so preposterous, that it carries with it its own contradiction. Many of the mistakes relative to the Pelasgi appear to have arisen from supposing the common name implied a common and united tribe, and not a vast and dispersed people, subdivided into innumerable families, and diversified by innumerable influences.

some deities of their own; and as these deities will as naturally be taken from external objects, common to all mankind, such as the sun or the moon, the waters or the earth, and honoured with attributes formed from passions and impressions no less universal;—so the deities of every tribe will have something kindred to each other, though the tribes themselves may never have come into contact or communication.

The mythology of the early Greeks may perhaps be derived from the following principal sources:—First, the worship of natural objects; —and of divinities, so formed, the most unequivocally national will obviously be those most associated with their mode of life, and the influences of their climate. When the savage first entrusts the seed to the bosom of the earth —when, through a strange and unaccountable process, he beholds what he buried in one season spring forth the harvest of the next—the EARTH itself, the mysterious garner, the benign, but sometimes the capricious reproducer of the treasures committed to its charge—becomes the object of the wonder, the hope and the fear, which are the natural origin of adoration and prayer. Again, when he discovers the influence of the heaven upon the growth of his labour—when, taught by experience, he ac-

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knowledges its power to blast, or to mellow—then, by the same process of ideas, the HEAVEN also assumes the character of divinity, and becomes a new agent, whose wrath is to be propitiated, whose favour is to be won. What common sense thus suggests to us, our researches confirm, and we find accordingly that the Earth and the Heaven are the earliest deities of the agricultural Pelasgi. As the Nile to the fields of the Egyptian—earth and heaven to the culture of the Greek. The effects of the SUN upon human labour and human enjoyment are so sensible to the simplest understanding, that we cannot wonder to find that glorious luminary among the most popular deities of ancient nations. Why search through the East to account for its worship in Greece? More easy to suppose that the inhabitants of a land, whom the sun so especially favoured—saw and blest it for it was good, than, amidst innumerable contradictions and extravagant assumptions, to decide upon that remoter shore, whence was transplanted a deity, whose effects were so benignant, whose worship so natural, to the Greeks. And in the more plain belief we are also borne out by the more sound inductions of learning. For it is noticeable that neither the moon nor the stars—favourite divinities with those who enjoyed the serene nights, or inhabited the

broad plains of the East—were (though probably admitted among the Pelasgic deities) honoured with that intense and reverent worship which attended them in Asia and in Egypt. To the Pelasgi, not yet arrived at the intellectual stage of philosophical contemplation, the most sensible objects of influence would be the most earnestly adored. What the stars were to the East, their own beautiful Aurora, awaking them to the delight of their genial and temperate climate, was to the early Greeks.

Of deities, thus created from external objects, some will rise out (if I may use the expression) of natural accident, and local circumstance. An earthquake will connect a deity with the earth—an inundation with the river or the sea. The Grecian soil bears the marks of maritime revolution; many of the tribes were settled along the coast, and perhaps had already adventured their rafts upon the main. A deity of the sea (without any necessary revelation from Africa) is, therefore, among the earliest of the Grecian gods. The attributes of each deity will be formed from the pursuits and occupations of the worshippers—sanguinary with the warlike—gentle with the peaceful. The pastoral Pelasgi of Arcadia honoured the pastoral Pan for ages before he was received by their Pelasgic brother-

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hood of Attica. And the agricultural Demeter or Ceres will be recognised among many tribes of the agricultural Pelasgi, which no Egyptian is reputed, even by tradition,* to have visited.

The origin of prayer is in the sense of dependence, and in the instinct of self-preservation, or self-interest. The first objects of prayer to the infant man will be those on which by his localities he believes himself to be most dependent for whatever blessings his mode of life inclines him the most to covet, or from which may come whatever peril his instinct will teach him the most to deprecate and fear. It is this obvious truth which destroys all the erudite systems that would refer the different creeds of the heathen to some single origin. Till the earth be the same in each region—till the same circumstances surround every tribe—different impressions, in nations yet unconverted and uncivilized, must produce different deities. Nature suggests a God, and man invests him with attributes. Nature and man, the same as a whole, vary in details; the one does not everywhere suggest the same notions—the other cannot everywhere imagine the same attributes. As with other tribes so with the Pelasgi, or primi-

* The connexion of Ceres with Isis was a subsequent innovation.

tive Greeks, their early gods were the creatures of their own early impressions.

As one source of religion was in external objects, so another is to be found in internal sensations and emotions. The Passions are so powerful in their effects upon individuals and nations, that we can be little surprised to find those effects attributed to the instigation and influence of a supernatural being. Love is individualized and personified in nearly all mythologies; and LOVE therefore ranks among the earliest of the Grecian gods. Fear, or terror, whose influence is often so strange, sudden, and unaccountable—seizing even the bravest—spreading through numbers with all the speed of an electric sympathy—and deciding in a moment the destiny of an army or the ruin of a tribe—is another of those passions, easily supposed the afflatus of some preternatural power, and easily, therefore, susceptible of personification. And the pride of men, more especially if habitually courageous and warlike, will gladly yield to the credulities which shelter a degrading and unwonted infirmity beneath the agency of a superior being. TERROR, therefore, received a shape and found an altar probably as early at least as the Heroic age. According to Plutarch, Theseus sacrificed to Terror previous to his battle with the Amazons;

—an idle tale, it is true, but proving, perhaps, the antiquity of a tradition. As society advanced from barbarism arose more intellectual creations —as cities were built, and as in the constant flux and reflux of martial tribes, cities were overthrown, the elements of the Social State grew into personification, to which influence was attributed, and reverence paid. Thus were fixed into divinity and shape, ORDER, PEACE, JUSTICE, and the stern and gloomy ORCOS,* witness of the oath, avenger of the perjury.

This, the second source of religion, though more subtle and refined in its creations, had still its origin in the same human causes as the first, viz. anticipation of good and apprehension of evil. Of deities so created, many, however, were the inventions of poets—(poetic metaphor is a fruitful mother of mythological fable)—many, also, were the graceful refinements of a subsequent age. But some (and nearly all those I have enumerated) may be traced to the earliest period to which such researches can ascend. It is obvious that the eldest would be connected with the passions—the more modern with the intellect.

It seems to me apparent that almost simulta-

* Orcos was the personification of an oath, or the sanctity of an oath.

neously with deities of these two classes would arise the greater and more influential class of personal divinities which gradually expanded into the Heroic Dynasty of Olympus. The associations which one tribe, or one generation, united with the heaven, the earth, or the sun, another might obviously connect, or confuse, with a Spirit or Genius inhabiting or influencing the element or physical object which excited their anxiety or awe: And, this creation effected—so what one tribe or generation might ascribe to the single personification of a passion, a faculty, or a moral and social principle, another would just as naturally refer to a personal and more complex deity:—that which in one instance would form the very nature of a superior being, in the other would form only an attribute—swell the power and amplify the character of a Jupiter, a Mars, a Venus, or a Pan. It is in the nature of man, that personal divinities once created and adored, should present more vivid and forcible images to his fancy than abstract personifications of physical objects and moral impressions. Thus, deities of this class would gradually rise into pre-eminence and popularity above those more vague and incorporeal—and (though I guard myself from absolutely solving in this manner the enigma of ancient theogonies)

the Family of Jupiter could scarcely fail to possess themselves of the shadowy thrones of the ancestral Earth and the primeval Heaven.

A third source of the Grecian, as of all mythologies, was in the worship of men who had actually existed, or been supposed to exist. For in this respect errors might creep into the calendar of heroes, as they did into the calendar of saints, (the hero-worship of the moderns,) which has canonized many names, to which it is impossible to find the owners. This was probably the latest, but perhaps in after-times the most influential and popular addition to the aboriginal faith. The worship of dead men once established, it was natural to a people so habituated to incorporate and familiarize religious impressions—to imagine that even their primary gods first formed from natural impressions, (and, still more, those deities they had borrowed from stranger creeds)—should have walked the earth. And thus amongst the multitude in the philosophical ages, even the loftiest of the Olympian dwellers were vaguely supposed to have known humanity;—their immortality but the apotheosis of the benefactor or the hero.

X. The Pelasgi, then, had their native or aboriginal deities, (differing in number and in attributes with each different tribe,) and

with them rests the foundation of the Greek mythology. They required no Egyptian wisdom to lead them to belief in superior powers. Nature was their primeval teacher. But as intercourse was opened with the East from the opposite Asia—with the North from the neighbouring Thrace, new deities were transplanted and old deities received additional attributes and distinctions, according as the fancy of the stranger found them assimilate to the divinities he had been accustomed to adore. It seems to me, that in Saturn we may trace the popular Phœnician deity—in the Thracian Mars, the fierce war-god of the North. But we can scarcely be too cautious how far we allow ourselves to be influenced by resemblance, however strong, between a Grecian and an alien deity. Such a resemblance may not only be formed by comparatively modern innovations, but may either be resolved to that general likeness which one polytheism will ever bear towards another, or arise from the adoption of new attributes and strange traditions;—so that the deity itself may be home-sprung and indigenous, while bewildering the inquirer with considerable similitude to other gods, from whose believers the native worship merely received an epithet, a ceremony, a symbol, or a fable. And this necessity of caution is pecu-

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liarly borne out by the contradictions which each scholar enamoured of a system gives to the labours of the speculator who preceded him. What one research would discover to be Egyptian, another asserts to be Phœnician ; a third brings from the North ; a fourth from the Hebrews ; and a fifth, with yet wilder imagination, from the far and then unpenetrated caves and woods of India. Accept common sense as our guide, and the contradictions are less irreconcilable—the mystery less obscure. In a deity essentially Greek, a Phœnician colonist may discover something familiar, and claim an ancestral god. He imparts to the native deity some Phœnician features : an Egyptian or an Asiatic succeeds him—discovers a similar likeness—introduces similar innovations. The lively Greek receives—amalgamates—appropriates all : but the aboriginal deity is not the less Greek. Each speculator may be equally right in establishing a partial resemblance precisely because all speculators are wrong in asserting a perfect identity.

It follows as a corollary from the above reasonings, that the religion of Greece was much less uniform than is popularly imagined ; 1st. because each separate state or canton had its own peculiar deity ; 2ndly, because in the foreign communication of new gods, each

stranger would especially import the deity that at home he had more especially adored. Hence to every state its tutelary god—the founder of its greatness, the guardian of its renown. Even in the petty and limited territory of Attica, each tribe, independent of the public worship, had its peculiar deities, honoured by peculiar rites.

The deity said to be introduced by Cecrops is Neith, or more properly Naith*—the goddess of Sais, in whom we are told to recognise the Athene, or Minerva of the Greeks. I pass over as palpably absurd any analogy of names by which the letters that compose the word Naith are inverted to the word Athene. The identity of the two goddesses must rest upon far stronger proof. But in order to obtain this proof we must know with some precision the nature and attributes of the divinity of Sais—a problem which no learning appears to me satisfactorily to have solved. It would be a strong, and, I think, a convincing argument that Athene is of foreign origin, could we be certain that her attributes, so eminently intellectual, so thoroughly out of harmony with the barbarism of the early Greeks, were accorded to her at the commencement of her worship. But the remotest traditions, (such as her contest with Neptune

* Naith in the Doric dialect.

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for the possession of the soil,) if we take the more simple interpretation, seem to prove her to have been originally an agricultural deity, the creation of which would have been natural enough to the agricultural Pelasgi;—while her supposed invention of some of the simplest and most elementary arts are sufficiently congenial to the notions of an unpolished and infant era of society. Nor at a long subsequent period is there much resemblance between the formal and elderly goddess of Dædalian sculpture and the glorious and august Glaucopis of Homer—the maiden of celestial beauty as of unrivalled wisdom. I grant that the variety of her attributes renders it more than probable that Athene was greatly indebted, perhaps to the "Divine Intelligence," personified in the Egyptian Naith —perhaps also, as Herodotus asserts, to the warlike deity of Libya—nor less, it may be, to the Onca of the Phœnicians,* from whom in

* If Onca, or Onga, *was* the name of the Phœnician goddess!—In the "Seven against Thebes," the chorus invoke Minerva under the name of Onca—and there can be no doubt that the Grecian Minerva is sometimes called Onca; but it is not clear to me that the Phœnicians had a deity of that name—nor can I agree with those who insist upon reading Onca for Siga in Pausanias, (lib. ix. chap. 12,) where he says Siga was the name of the Phœnician Minerva. The

learning certain of the arts, the Greeks might simultaneously learn the name and worship of the Phœnician deity, presiding over such inventions. Still an aboriginal deity was probably the nucleus, round which gradually gathered various and motley attributes. And certain it is, that as soon as the whole creation rose into distinct life, the stately and virgin Goddess towers, aloof and alone, the most national, the most majestic of the Grecian deities—rising above all comparison with those who may have assisted to decorate and robe her,—embodying in a single form, the very genius, multiform, yet individual as it was, of the Grecian people—and becoming among all the deities of the heathen heaven, what the Athens she protected became upon the earth.

XI. It may be said of the Greeks, that there never was a people who so completely nationalized all that they borrowed from a foreign source. And whatever, whether in a remoter or more recent age, it *might* have appropriated from the creed of Isis and Osiris, one cause alone would have sufficed to efface from the

Phœnicians evidently had a deity correspondent with the Greek Minerva; but that it was named Onca, or Onga, is by no means satisfactorily proved; and the Scholiast, on Pindar, derives the epithet as applied to Minerva from a Bœotian village.

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Grecian the peculiar character of the Egyptian mythology.

The religion of Egypt, as a *science;* was symbolical—it denoted elementary principles of philosophy; its gods were enigmas. It has been asserted (on very insufficient data) that in the earliest ages of the world, one god, of whom the sun was either the emblem, or the actual object of worship, was adored universally throughout the East, and that polytheism was created by personifying the properties and attributes of the single deity: "there being one God," says Aristotle, finely, "called by many names, from the various effects which his various power produces." * But I am far from believing that a symbolical religion is ever the *earliest* author of polytheism; for a symbolical religion belongs to a later period of civilisation, when some men are set apart in indolence to cultivate their imagination, in order to beguile or to instruct the reason of the rest. Priests are the first philosophers—a symbolical religion the first philosophy. But faith precedes philosophy. I doubt not, therefore, that polytheism existed in the East before that age when the priests of Chaldæa and of Egypt invested it with a sublimer character by summoning to the aid of invention a wild and speculative wisdom—by

* De Mundo, c. 7.

representing under corporeal tokens, the revolutions of the earth, the seasons, and the stars, and creating new (or more probably adapting old and sensual) superstitions, as the grosser and more external types of a philosophical creed.* But a symbolical worship—the creation of a separate and established order of priests—never is, and never can be, the religion professed, loved, and guarded, by a people. The multitude demand something positive and real for their belief—they cannot worship a delusion—their reverence would be benumbed on the instant, if they could be made to comprehend that the god to whom they sacrificed was no actual power able to effect evil and good, but the type of a particular season of the year, or an unwholesome principle in the air. Hence, in the Egyptian religion, there was one creed for the vulgar and another for the priests. Again, to invent and to perpetuate a symbolical religion (which is, in fact,

* The Egyptians supposed three principles: 1st. One benevolent and universal Spirit. 2nd. Matter coeval with Eternity. 3rd. Nature opposing the good of the universal Spirit. We find these principles in a variety of shapes typified through their deities. Besides their types of Nature, as the Egyptians adopted Hero gods, typical fables were invented to conceal their humanity, to excuse their errors, or to dignify their achievements.

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an hereditary school of metaphysics) requires men set apart for the purpose, whose leisure tempts them to invention,—whose interest prompts them to imposture. A symbolical religion is a proof of a certain refinement in civilisation—the refinement of sages in the midst of a subservient people; and it absorbs to itself those meditative and imaginative minds which, did it not exist, would be devoted to philosophy. Now, even allowing full belief to the legends which bring the Egyptian colonists into Greece, it is probable that few amongst them were acquainted with the secrets of the symbolical mythology they introduced. Nor, if they were so, is it likely that they would have communicated to a strange and a barbarous population the profound and latent mysteries shrouded from the great majority of Egyptians themselves. Thus whatever the Egyptian colonizers might have imported of a typical religion, the abstruser meaning would become, either at once, or gradually, lost. Nor can we—until the recent age of sophists and refiners—clearly ascertain any period in which did not exist the indelible distinction between the Grecian and Egyptian mythology: viz.—that the first was actual, real, corporeal, household; the second vague, shadowy, and symbolical. This might not have been the case had there been established

in the Grecian, as in the Egyptian cities, distinct and separate colleges of priests, having in their own hands the sole care of the religion, and forming a privileged and exclusive body of the state. But amongst the Greeks (and this should be constantly borne in mind) there never was, at any known historical period, a distinct caste of priests.* We may perceive, indeed, that the early colonizers commenced with approaches to that principle, but it was not prosecuted farther. There were sacred families in Athens from which certain priesthoods were to be filled—but even these personages were not otherwise distinguished; they performed all the usual offices of a citizen, and were not united together by any exclusiveness of privilege or spirit of party. Amongst the Egyptian adventurers there were probably none fitted by previous education for the sacred office; and the chief who had obtained the dominion might entertain no irresistible affection for a caste which in his own land he had seen dictating to the monarch, and interfering with the government.†

* See Heeren's Political History of Greece, in which this point is luminously argued.

† Besides, it is not the character of emigrants from a people accustomed to castes, to propagate those castes superior to their own, of which they have exported no representatives. Suppose none of that privileged and noble order called 'the priests,' to have accompanied the Egyptian migra-

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Thus, among the early Greeks, we find the chiefs themselves were contented to offer the sacrifice and utter the prayer; and though there were indeed appointed and special priests, they held no imperious or commanding authority. The Areopagus at Athens had the care of religion, but the Areopagites were not priests. This absence of a priestly caste had considerable effect upon the flexile and familiar nature of the Grecian creed, because there were none professionally interested in guarding the purity of the religion, in preserving to what it had borrowed, symbolical allusions, and in forbidding the admixture of new gods and heterogeneous creeds. The more popular a religion, the more it seeks corporeal representations, and avoids the dim and frigid shadows of a metaphysical belief.*

The romantic fables connected with the Grecian mythology, were, some home-sprung, some relating to native heroes, and incorporating native legends, but they were also, in great measure, literal interpretations of symbolical

tors, those migrators would never have dreamt of instituting that order in their new settlement, any more than a colony of the warrior caste in India would establish, out of their own order, a spurious and fictitious caste of Brahmins.

* When, in a later age, Karmath, the impostor of the East, sought to undermine Mohammedanism, his most successful policy was in declaring its commands to be allegories.

types, and of metaphorical expressions, or erroneous perversions of words in other tongues. The craving desire to account for natural phenomena, common to mankind—the wish to appropriate to native heroes the wild tales of mariners and strangers, natural to a vain and a curious people—the additions which every legend would receive in its progress from tribe to tribe—and the constant embellishments the most homely invention would obtain, from the competition of rival poets, rapidly served to swell and enrich these primary treasures of Grecian lore—to deduce a history from an allegory—to establish a creed in a romance. Thus the *early* mythology of Greece is to be properly considered in its simple and outward interpretations. The Greeks as yet in their social infancy, regarded the legends of their faith as a child reads a fairy tale, credulous of all that is supernatural in the agency—unconscious of all that may be philosophical in the moral.

It is true, indeed, that dim associations of a religion, sabæan and elementary, such as that of the Pelasgi, (but not therefore foreign and philosophical,) with a religion physical and popular, are, here and there, to be faintly traced amongst the eldest of the Grecian authors. We may see that in Jupiter they represented the ether, and in Apollo, and sometimes even in

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Hercules, the sun. But these authors, while, perhaps unconsciously, they hinted at the symbolical, fixed, by the vitality and nature of their descriptions, the *actual* images of the gods; and, reversing the order of things, Homer created Jupiter!*

But most of the subtle and typical interpretations of the Grecian mythology known to us at present were derived from the philosophy of a later age. The explanations of religious fables—such, for instance, as the chaining of Saturn by Jupiter, and the rape of Proserpine by Pluto, in which Saturn is made to signify the revolution of the seasons, chained to the courses of the stars, to prevent too immoderate a speed, and the rape of Proserpine is refined into an allegory that denotes the seeds of corn that the sovereign principle of the earth receives and sepulchres;†—the moral or physical explanation

* Herodotus (b. 11, c. 53,) observes, that it is to Hesiod and Homer the Greeks owe their theogony; that they gave the gods their titles, fixed their ranks, and described their shapes. And although this cannot be believed literally, in some respects it may, metaphorically. Doubtless, the poets took their descriptions from popular traditions; but they made those traditions immortal. Jupiter could never become symbolical to a people who had once pictured to themselves the nod and curls of the Jupiter of Homer.

* Cicero de Natura Deorum, b. ii.—Most of the philosophical interpretations of the Greek mythology were the off-

of legends like these was, I say, the work of the few, reduced to system either from foreign communication or acute invention. For a symbolical religion, created by the priests of one age, is reinstated or remodelled after its corruption by the philosophers of another.

XII. We may here pause a moment to inquire whence the Greeks derived the most lovely and fascinating of their mythological creations—those lesser and more terrestrial beings—the Spirits of the mountain, the waters, and the grove.

Throughout the East, from the remotest era, we find that Mountains were Nature's Temples. The sanctity of High Places is constantly recorded in the scriptural writings. The Chaldæan, the Egyptian, and the Persian, equally believed that on the summit of mountains they approached themselves nearer to the oracles of heaven. But the fountain, the cavern, and the grove, were no less holy than the mountain-top in the eyes of the first religionists of the East. Streams and fountains were dedicated to the Sun, and their exhalations were supposed to inspire with prophecy, and to breathe of the god. The gloom

spring of the Alexandrine schools. It is to the honour of Aristarchus that he combated a theory that very much resembles the philosophy that would convert the youthful readers of Mother Bunch into the inventors of allegorical morality.

BOOK I. CHAP. I. of caverns, naturally the brooding place of awe, was deemed a fitting scene for diviner revelations—it inspired unearthly contemplation, and mystic reverie. Zoroaster is supposed by Porphyry (well versed in all Pagan lore, though frequently misunderstanding its proper character) to have first inculcated the worship of caverns;* and there the early priests held a temple, and primeval philosophy its retreat.† Groves, espe-

* But the worship can be traced to a much earlier date than that the most plausibly ascribed to the Persian Zoroaster.

† So Epimenides of Crete is said to have spent forty-five years in a cavern, and Minos descends into the sacred cave of Jupiter to receive from him the elements of law. The awe attached to woods and caverns, it may be observed, is to be found in the Northern as well as Eastern superstitions. And there is scarcely a nation on the earth in which we do not find the ancient superstition has especially attached itself to the cavern and the forest, peopling them with peculiar demons. Darkness, Silence, and Solitude are priests that eternally speak to the senses;—and few of the most sceptical of us have been lost in thick woods, or entered lonely caverns, without acknowledging their influence upon the imagination: "Ipsa silentia," says beautifully the elder Pliny, "ipsa silentia adoramus." The effect of streams and fountains upon the mind seems more unusual and surprising. Yet, to a people unacquainted with physics, waters embued with mineral properties, or exhaling mephitic vapours, may well appear possessed of a something preternatural. Accordingly, at this day, among many savage tribes we find that such springs are regarded with veneration and awe.

cially those in high places, or in the neighbourhood of exhaling streams, were also appropriate to worship, and conducive to the dreams of an excited and credulous imagination; and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, burnt incense, not only on the hills, but "under every green tree."*

These places, then—the mountain, the forest, the stream, and the cavern, were equally objects of sanctity and awe, among the ancient nations.

But we need not necessarily suppose that a superstition so universal, was borrowed, and not conceived, by the early Greeks. The same causes which had made them worship the Earth and the Sea, extended their faith to the Rivers and the Mountains, which in a spirit of natural and simple poetry they called 'the children' of those elementary deities. The very soil of Greece, broken up and diversified by so many inequalities, stamped with volcanic features, profuse in streams and mephitic fountains, con-

The people of Fiji, in the South Seas, have a well which they imagine the passage to the next world: they even believe that you may see in its waters the spectral images of things rolling on to eternity. Fountains no less than groves, were objects of veneration with our Saxon ancestors. —See Meginhard, Wilkins, &c.

* 2 Kings xvi. 4.

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tributed to render the feeling of local divinity prevalent and intense. Each petty canton had its own Nile, whose influence upon fertility and culture was sufficient to become worthy to propitiate, and therefore to personify. Had Greece been united under one monarchy, and characterised by one common monotony of soil, a single river, a single mountain, alone might have been deemed divine. It was the number of its tribes—it was the variety of its natural features, which produced the affluence and prodigality of its mythological creations. Nor can we omit from the causes of the teeming, vivid, and universal superstition of Greece, the accidents of earthquake and inundation, to which the land appears early and often to have been exposed. To the activity and caprice of Nature—to the frequent operation of causes, unrecognised, unforeseen, unguest, the Greeks owed much of their disposition to recur to mysterious and superior agencies—and that wonderful poetry of faith which delighted to associate the Visible with the Unseen. The peculiar character not only of a people, but of its earlier poets —not only of its soil, but of its air and heaven colours the superstitions it creates: And most of the terrestrial dæmons which the gloomier North clothed with terror, and endowed with malice, took from the benignant genius, and the

enchanting climes of Greece, the gentlest offices and the fairest forms;—yet even in Greece itself not universal in their character, but rather the faithful reflections of the character of each class of worshippers: thus the Graces,* whose "eyes" in the minstrelsy of Hesiod, "distilled care-beguiling love," in Lacedæmon were the Nymphs of Discipline and War!

In quitting this subject, be one remark permitted in digression; the local causes which contributed to superstition might conduct in after-times to science. If the Nature that was so constantly in strange and fitful action, dróve the Greeks in their social infancy to seek agents for the action and vents for their awe, so as they advanced to maturer intellect, it was in Nature herself that they sought the causes of effects that appeared at first preternatural. And, in either stage, their curiosity and interest aroused by the phenomena around them—the credulous inventions of ignorance gave way to the eager explanations of philosophy. Often in the super-

* Of the three Graces, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, the Spartans originally worshipped but one—(Aglaia, splendour,) under the name of Phaenna, brightness: they rejected the other two, whose names signify Joy and Pleasure, and adopted a substitute in one whose name was *Sound* (Cletha,) —a very common substitute now-a-days!

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stition of one age—lies the germ that ripens into the inquiry of the next.

XIII. Pass we now to some examination of the general articles of faith amongst the Greeks ; —their sacrifices, and rites of worship.

In all the more celebrated nations of the ancient world, we find established those twin elements of belief by which religion harmonizes and directs the social relations of life, viz. a faith in a future state, and in the providence of superior Powers, who, surveying as judges the affairs of earth, punish the wicked and reward the good.* It has been plausibly conjectured that the fables of Elysium, the slow Cocytus, and the gloomy Hades, were either invented or allegorized from the names of Egyptian places. Diodorus assures us that by the vast catacombs of Egypt, the dismal mansions of the dead—were the temple and stream, both called Cocytus, the foul canal of Acheron, and the Elysian plains ;† and, according to the same equivocal authority,

* The Persian creed, derived from Zoroaster, resembled the most to that of Christianity. It inculcated the resurrection of the dead, the universal triumph of Ormuzd, the Principle of Light—the destruction of the reign of Ahrimanes, the Evil Principle.

† Wherever Egyptian, or indeed Grecian colonies migrated, nothing was more natural than that where they found

the body of the dead was wafted across the waters by a pilot, termed Charon in the Egyptian tongue. But, previous to the embarcation, appointed judges on the margin of the Acheron listened to whatever accusations were preferred by the living against the deceased, and if convinced of his misdeeds, deprived him of the rites of sepulture. Hence it was supposed that Orpheus transplanted into Greece the fable of the infernal regions. But there is good reason to look on this tale with distrust, and to believe that the doctrine of a future state was known to the Greeks without any tuition from Egypt;—while it is certain that the main moral of the Egyptian ceremony, viz. the judgment of the dead, was *not* familiar to the early doctrine of the Greeks. They did not believe that the good were rewarded and the bad punished in that dreary future, which they embodied in their notions of the Kingdom of the Shades.*

XIV. Less in the Grecian deities than in the customs in their honour, may we perceive certain traces of Oriental superstition. We recognise

a coincidence of scene, they should establish a coincidence of name. In Epirus were also the Acheron and Cocytus; and Campania contains the whole topography of the Virgilian Hades.

* See sect. xxi. p. 77.

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the usages of the elder creeds in the chosen sites of their temples—the habitual ceremonies of their worship. It was to the East that the supplicator turned his face, and he was sprinkled, as a necessary purification, with the holy water often alluded to by sacred writers as well as profane—a typical rite entailed from Paganism on the greater proportion of existing Christendom. Nor was any oblation duly prepared until it was mingled with salt—that homely and immemorial offering, ordained not nly by the priests of the heathen idols, but also prescribed by Moses to the covenant of the Hebrew God.*

XV. We now come to those sacred festivals in celebration of religious mysteries, which inspire modern times with so earnest an interest. Per-

* Fire was every where in the East a sacred symbol—though it cannot be implicitly believed that the Vulcan or Hephaistus of the Greeks has his prototype or original in the Egyptian Phta or Phtas. The Persian philosophy made fire a symbol of the Divine Intelligence—the Persian credulity, like the Grecian, converted the symbol into the god, (Max. Tyr. Dissert. 38; Herod. lib. 3, c. 16.) The Jews themselves connected the element with their true Deity. It is in fire that Jehovah reveals himself. A sacred flame was burnt unceasingly in the temples of Israel, and grave the punishment attached to the neglect which suffered its extinction. (Maimonides, Tract. vi.)

haps no subject connected with the religion of the ancients has been cultivated with more laborious erudition, attended with more barren result. And with equal truth and wit, the acute and searching Lobeck has compared the schools of Warburton and St. Croix to the Sabines, who possessed the faculty of dreaming what they wished. According to an ancient and still popular account, the dark enigmas of Eleusis were borrowed from Egypt;—the drama of the Anaglyph.* But in answer to this theory we must observe, that even if really, at their commencement, the strange and solemn rites which they are asserted to have been—mystical ceremonies grow so naturally out of the connexion between the Awful and the Unknown—were found so generally among the savages of the ancient world—howsoever dispersed—and still so frequently meet the traveller on shores to which it is indeed a wild speculation to assert that the Oriental wisdom ever wandered, that it is more likely that they were the offspring of the native ignorance,†

* The Anaglyph expressed the secret writings of the Egyptians, known only to the priests. The hieroglyph was known generally to the educated.

† In Gaul, Cæsar finds some tribes more civilized than the rest, cultivating the science of sacrifice, and possessed of the dark philosophy of superstitious mysteries; but in certain

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than the sublime importation of a symbolical philosophy utterly ungenial to the tribes to which it was communicated, and the times to which the institution is referred. And though I would assign to the Eleusinian Mysteries a much earlier date than Lobeck is inclined to affix,* I search in vain for a more probable supposition of the causes of their origin than that which he suggests, and which I now place before the reader. We have seen that each Grecian state had its peculiar and favourite deities, propitiated by varying ceremonies. The early Greeks imagined that their gods might be won from them by the more earnest prayers and the more splendid offerings of their neighbours; the Homeric heroes found their claim for divine protection on the number of the offerings they have rendered to the deity they implore. And how far the jealous desire to retain to themselves the favour of tutelary gods was entertained by the Greeks, may be illustrated by the instances specially alluding

other and more uncivilized tribes only the elements and the heavenly luminaries *(quos cernunt et quorum opibus apertè juvantur)* were worshipped, and the lore of sacrifice was unstudied. With the Pelasgi, as with the Gauls, I believe that such distinctions might have been found simultaneously in different tribes.

* The arrival of Ceres in Attica is referred to the time of Pandion by Apollodorus.

to the low and whispered voice in which prayers were addressed to the superior powers, lest the enemy should hear the address, and vie with interested emulation for the celestial favour. The Eleusinians, in frequent hostilities with their neighbours, the Athenians, might very reasonably, therefore, exclude the latter from the ceremonies instituted in honour of their guardian divinities, Demeter and Persephone, (*i.e.* Ceres and Proserpine.) And we may here add, that secrecy once established, the rites might at a very early period obtain, and perhaps deserve, an enigmatic and mystic character. But when, after a signal defeat of the Eleusinians, the two states were incorporated, the union was confirmed by a joint participation in the ceremony* to which a political cause would thus give a more formal and solemn dignity. This account

* When Lobeck desires to fix the date of this religious union at so recent an epoch as the time of Solon, in consequence of a solitary passage in Herodotus, in which Solon, conversing with Crœsus, speaks of hostilities between the Athenians and Eleusinians, he seems to me to fail in sufficient ground for the assumption. The rite might have been instituted in consequence of a far earlier feud and league—even that traditionally recorded in the Mythic age of Erechtheus and Eumolpus, but could not entirely put an end to the struggles of Eleusis for independence, or prevent the outbreak of occasional jealousy and dissension.

of the origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries is not indeed capable of demonstration, but it seems to me at least the most probable in itself, and the most conformable to the habits of the Greeks, as to those of all early nations.

Certain it is that for a long time the celebration of the Eleusinian ceremonies was confined to these two neighbouring states, until, as various causes contributed to unite the whole of Greece in a common religion, and a common name, admission was granted to all Greeks of all ranks, male and female,—provided they had committed no inexpiable offence, performed the previous ceremonies required, and were introduced by an Athenian citizen.

With the growing fame and splendour of Athens, this institution rose into celebrity and magnificence, until it appears to have become the most impressive spectacle of the heathen world. It is evident that a people so imitative would reject no innovations or additions that could increase the interest or the solemnity of exhibition; and still less such as might come, (through whatsoever channel,) from that antique and imposing Egypt, which excited so much of their veneration and wonder. Nor do I think it possible to account for the great similarity attested by Herodotus and others, between the mys-

teries of Isis and those of Ceres, as well as for the resemblance in less celebrated ceremonies between the rites of Egypt and of Greece, without granting at once, that mediately, or even immediately, the superstitions of the former exercised great influence upon, and imparted many features to, those of the latter. But the age in which this religious communication principally commenced has been a matter of graver dispute than the question merits. A few solitary and scattered travellers and strangers may probably have given rise to it at a very remote period; but, upon the whole, it appears to me, that, with certain modifications, we must agree with Lobeck, and the more rational schools of inquiry, that it was principally in the interval between the Homeric age and the Persian war that mysticism passed into religion —that superstition assumed the attributes of a science—and that lustrations, auguries, orgies, obtained method and system from the exuberant genius of poetical fanaticism.

That in these august Mysteries, doctrines contrary to the popular religion were propounded, is a theory that has, I think, been thoroughly overturned. The exhibition of ancient statues, relics and symbols, concealed from daily adoration, (as in the Catholic festivals of this day,) probably, made a main duty of the Hierophant.

BOOK I. CHAP. I. But in a ceremony in honour of Ceres, the blessings of agriculture, and its connection with civilisation were also very naturally dramatized. The visit of the goddess to the Infernal Regions, might form an imposing part of the spectacle: spectral images—alternations of light and darkness—all the apparitions and effects that are said to have imparted so much awe to the mysteries, may well have harmonized with, not contravened the popular belief. And there is no reason to suppose that the explanations given by the priests did more than account for mythological stories, agreeably to the spirit and form of the received mythology, or deduce moral maxims from the representation, as hacknied, as simple, and as ancient, as the generality of moral aphorisms are. But as the intellectual progress of the audience advanced, philosophers, sceptical of the popular religion, delighted to draw from such imposing representations a thousand theories and morals, utterly unknown to the vulgar: and the fancies and refinements of later schoolmen have thus been mistaken for the notions of an early age, and a promiscuous multitude. The single fact, (so often insisted upon,) that all Greeks were admissible, is sufficient alone to prove that no secrets incompatible with the common faith, or very important in

themselves, could either have been propounded by the priests, or received by the audience. And it may be further observed, in corroboration of so self-evident a truth, that it was held an impiety to the *popular* faith to reject the initiation of the mysteries—and that some of the very writers, most superstitious with respect to the one, attach the most solemnity to the ceremonies of the other.

XVI. Sanchoniathon wrote a work, now lost, on the Worship of the Serpent. This most ancient superstition, found invariably in Egypt and the East, is also to be traced through many of the legends, and many of the ceremonies of the Greeks. The serpent was a frequent emblem of various gods—it was often kept about the temples—it was introduced in the Mysteries —it was every where considered sacred. Singular enough, by the way, that while with us the symbol of the evil spirit, the serpent was generally in the East considered a benefactor. In India, the serpent with a thousand heads; in Egypt, the serpent crowned with the lotos-leaf, is a benign and paternal deity. It was not uncommon for fable to assert that the first civilizers of earth were half-man, half-serpent. Thus was Fohi of China* represented, and thus Cecrops of Athens.

* Kneph, the Agatho dæmon, or Good Spirit of Egypt,

XVII. But the most remarkable feature of the superstition of Greece was her sacred oracles. And these again bring our inquiries back to Egypt. Herodotus informs us that the oracle of Dodona was by far the most ancient in Greece,* and he then proceeds to inform us of its origin, which he traces to Thebes in Egypt. But here we are beset by contradictions: Herodotus, on the authority of the Egyptian priests, ascribes the origin of the Dodona and Libyan oracles to two priestesses of the Theban Jupiter—stolen by Phœnician pirates—one of whom, sold into Greece, established at Dodona an oracle similar to that which she had served at Thebes. But in previous passages Herodotus informs us, 1st, that in Egypt, no priestesses served the temples of any deity, male or female; and 2ndly, that when the Egyptians imparted to the Pelasgi the names of their divinities, the Pelasgi consulted the oracle of Dodona on the propriety of adopting them; so that that oracle existed before even the first and fundamental revelations of Egyptian religion. It seems to me, therefore, a supposi-

had his symbol in the serpent. It was precisely because sacred with the rest of the world that the serpent would be an object of abhorrence with the Jews. But by a curious remnant of oriental superstition, the early Christians often represented the Messiah by the serpent—and the emblem of Satan became that of the Saviour.

* Lib. ii. c. 52, 4.

tion that demands less hardy assumption, and is equally conformable with the universal superstitions of mankind, (since similar attempts at divination are to be found among so many nations similarly barbarous,) to believe that the oracle arose from the impressions of the Pelasgi* and the natural phenomena of the spot; though at a subsequent period the manner of the divination was very probably imitated from that adopted by the Theban oracle. And in examining the place it indeed seems as if Nature herself had been the Egyptian priestess! Through a mighty grove of oaks there ran a stream, whose waters supplied a fountain that might well appear, to ignorant wonder, endowed with preternatural properties. At a certain hour of noon it was dry, and at midnight full. Such springs have usually been deemed oracular, not only in the East, but in almost every section of the globe.

At first, by the murmuring of waters, and afterwards by noises among the trees, the sacred impostors interpreted the voice of the god. It is an old truth, that mystery is always imposing, and often convenient. To plain questions were given dark answers, which might admit of interpretation according to the event. The importance attached to the oracle, the respect paid to the priest, and

* And this opinion is confirmed by Dionysius and Strabo, who consider the Dodona oracle originally Pelasgic.

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the presents heaped on the altar indicated to craft and ambition a profitable profession. And that profession became doubly alluring to its members, because it proffered to the priests an authority in serving the oracles, which they could not obtain in the general religion of the people. Oracles increased then, at first slowly, and afterwards rapidly, until they grew so numerous that the single district of Bœotia contained no less than twenty-five. The oracle of Dodona long, however, maintained its pre-eminence over the rest, and was only at last eclipsed by that of Delphi,* where strong and intoxicating exhalations from a neighbouring stream were supposed to confer prophetic frenzy. Experience augmented the sagacity of the oracles, and the priests, no doubt, intimately acquainted with all the affairs of the states around, and viewing the living contests of action with the coolness of spectators, were often enabled to give shrewd and sensible admonitions,—so that the forethought of wisdom passed for the prescience of divinity. Hence the greater part of their predictions were eminently successful, and when the reverse occurred, the fault was laid on the blind misconstruction of the human applicant. Thus no great design was executed, no city founded, no colony planted, no war undertaken, without the advice of an

* Also Pelasgic, according to Strabo.

oracle. In the famine, the pestilence, and the battle, the Divine Voice was the assuager of terror, and the inspirer of hope. All the instincts of our frailer nature, ever yearning for some support that is not of the world, were enlisted in behalf of a superstition which proffered solutions to doubt, and remedies to distress.

Besides this general cause for the influence of oracles, there was another cause calculated to give to the oracles of Greece a marked and popular pre-eminence over those in Egypt. A country divided into several small, free, and warlike states, would be more frequently in want of the divine advice, than one united under a single monarchy, or submitted to the rigid austerity of castes and priestcraft;—and in which the inhabitants felt for political affairs all the languid indifference habitual to the subjects of a despotic government. Half a century might pass in Egypt without any political event that would send anxious thousands to the oracle; but in the wonderful ferment, activity, and restlessness of the numerous Grecian towns, every month, every week, there was some project, or some feud, for which the advice of a divinity was desired. Hence it was chiefly to a political cause that the immortal oracle of Delphi owed its pre-eminent importance. The Dorian wor-

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shippers of Apollo, (long attached to that oracle, then comparatively obscure,) passing from its neighbourhood and befriended by its predictions, obtained the mastership of the Peloponnesus ; —their success was the triumph of the oracle. The Dorian Sparta, (long the most powerful of the Grecian states,) inviolably faithful to the Delphian God, upheld his authority, and spread the fame of his decrees. But in the more polished and enlightened times the reputation of the oracle gradually decayed ; it shone the brightest before and during the Persian war ;— the appropriate light of an age of Chivalry fading slowly as Philosophy arose !

XVIII. But the practice of Divination did not limit itself to these more solemn sources—its enthusiasm was contagious—its assistance was ever at hand.* Enthusiasm operated on the

* " The Americans did not long suppose the efficacy of conjuration to be confined to one subject—they had recourse to it in every situation of danger or distress. * * * * From this weakness proceeded likewise the faith of the Americans in dreams, their observation of omens, their attention to the chirping of birds and the cries of animals, all which they supposed to be indications of future events."—Robertson's History of America, book iv.

Might not any one imagine that he were reading the character of the ancient Greeks? This is not the only point of resemblance between the Americans, (when discovered by the

humblest individuals. One person imagined himself possessed by a spirit actually passing into his soul — another merely inspired by the divine breath — a third was cast into supernatural extasies, in which he beheld the shadow of events, or the visions of a God—a three-fold species of divine possession which we may still find recognised by the fanatics of a graver faith! Nor did this suffice: a world of omens surrounded every man. There were not only signs and warnings in the winds, the earthquake, the eclipse of the sun or moon, the meteor, or the thunderbolt—but dreams also were reduced to a science;* the entrails of

Spaniards,) and the Greeks in their early history; but the resemblance is merely that of a civilisation in some respects equally advanced.

* The notion of Democritus of Abdera, respecting the origin of dreams and divination, may not be uninteresting to the reader, partly from something vast and terrible in the phantasy, partly as a proof of the strange, incongruous, bewildered chaos of thought, from which at last broke the light of the Grecian philosophy. He introduced the hypothesis of images, (εἰδωλα,) emanating as it were from external objects, which impress our sense, and whose influence creates sensation and thought. Dreams and divination he referred to the impressions communicated by images of gigantic and vast stature, which inhabited the air and encompassed the world. Yet this philosopher is the original of Epicurus, and Epicurus is the original of the modern Utilitarians!

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And although in later times much of this more frivolous superstition passed away—although Theophrastus speaks of such lesser omens with the same witty disdain as that with which the Spectator ridicules our fears at the upsetting of a saltcellar, or the appearance of a winding-sheet in a candle,—yet in the more interesting period of Greece these popular credulities were not disdained by the nobler or wiser few, and to the last they retained that influence upon the mass which they lost with individuals. And it is only by constantly remembering this universal atmosphere of religion, that we can embue ourselves with a correct understanding of the character of the Greeks in their most Grecian age. Their faith was with them ever—in sorrow or in joy—at the funeral or the feast—in their uprisings and their downsittings

—abroad and at home—at the hearth and in the market-place—in the camp or at the altar. Morning and night all the greater tribes of the elder world offered their supplications on high: and Plato has touchingly insisted on this sacred uniformity of custom, when he tells us, that at the rising of the moon and at the dawning of the sun, you may behold Greeks and barbarians—all the nations of the earth—bowing in homage to the Gods.

XIX. To sum up, the above remarks conduce to these principal conclusions; First, that the Grecian mythology cannot be moulded into any of the capricious and fantastic systems of erudite ingenuity: as a whole, no mythology can be considered more strikingly original, not only because its foundations appear indigenous, and based upon the character and impressions of the people—not only because at no one period, from the earliest even to the latest date, whatever occasional resemblances may exist, can any *identity* be established between its most popular and essential creations, and those of any other faith; but because, even all that it borrowed it rapidly remodelled and naturalized, growing yet more individual from its very complexity, yet more original from the plagiarisms which it embraced; Secondly, that it differed in many details in the

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different states, but under the developement of a general intercourse, assisted by a common language, the plastic and tolerant genius of the people harmonized all discords—until (catholic in its fundamental principles) her religion united the whole of Greece in indissoluble bonds of faith and poetry—of daily customs and venerable traditions: thirdly, that the influence of other creeds, though by no means unimportant in amplifying the character, and adding to the list, of the primitive deities, appears far more evident in the ceremonies and usages, than the personal creations, of the faith. We may be reasonably sceptical as to what Herodotus heard of the *origin* of rites or gods from Egyptian priests; but there is no reason to disbelieve the testimony of his experience, when he asserts, that the forms and solemnities of one worship closely resemble those of another;—the imitation of a foreign ceremony is perfectly compatible with the aboriginal invention of a national God. For the rest, I think it might be, (and by many scholars appears to me to have been,) abundantly shewn, that the Phœnician influences upon the early mythology of the Greeks were far greater than the Egyptian, though by degrees, and long after the Heroic Age, the latter became more eagerly adopted, and more superficially apparent.

In quitting this part of our subject, let it be observed as an additional illustration of the remarkable nationality of the Grecian mythology, that our best light to the manners of the Homeric men, is in the study of the Homeric Gods. In Homer we behold the mythology of an era, for analogy to which we search in vain the records of the East—that mythology is inseparably connected with the constitution of limited monarchies,—with the manners of an Heroic Age:—the power of the Sovereign of the Aristocracy of Heaven is the power of a Grecian king over a Grecian state;—the social life of the Gods is the life most coveted by the Grecian Heroes;—the uncertain attributes of the deities, rather physical or intellectual than moral—strength and beauty, sagacity mixed with cunning—valour with ferocity—inclination to war, yet faculties for the inventions of peace;—such were the attributes most honoured among men, in the progressive, but still uncivilized age which makes the interval so pre-eminently Grecian—between the Mythical and Historic times. Vain and impotent are all attempts to identify that religion of Achaian warriors with the religion of Oriental priests. It was, indeed, symbolical—but of the character of its believers; typical—but of the restless, yet poetical, daring, yet graceful temperament, which afterwards

BOOK I. CHAP. I. conducted to great achievements and imperishable arts: the coming events of glory cast their shadows before, in fable.

XX. There now opens to us a far more important inquiry than that into the origin and form of the religion of the Greeks; namely, the influences of that religion itself upon their character—their morals—their social and intellectual tendencies.

The more we can approach the Deity to ourselves—the more we can invest Him with human attributes—the more we can connect Him with the affairs and sympathies of earth, the greater will be His influence upon our conduct—the more fondly we shall contemplate His attributes, the more timidly we shall shrink from His vigilance, the more anxiously we shall strive for His approval. When Epicurus allowed the Gods to exist, but imagined them wholly indifferent to the concerns of men, contemplating only their own happiness, and regardless alike of our virtues or our crimes;—with that doctrine he robbed man of the Divinity, as effectually as if he had denied His existence. The fear of the Gods could not be before the eyes of votaries who believed that the Gods were utterly careless of their conduct; and not only the awful control of religion was removed from the passions, but the more beautiful part of its influence, resulting not

from terror but from hope, was equally blasted and destroyed: For if the fear of the Divine Power serves to restrain the less noble natures, so, on the other hand, with such as are more elevated and generous, there is no pleasure like the belief that we are regarded with approbation and love by a Being of ineffable majesty and goodness—who compassionates our misfortunes—who rewards our struggles with ourselves. It is this hope which gives us a pride in our own natures, and which not only restrains us from vice, but inspires us with an emulation to arouse within us all that is great and virtuous, in order the more to deserve His love, and feel the Image of Divinity reflected upon the soul. It is for this reason that we are not contented to leave the character of a God uncertain and unguessed, shrouded in the darkness of his own infinite power; we clothe him with the attributes of human excellence, carried only to an extent beyond humanity; and cannot conceive a deity, not possessed of the qualities—such as justice, wisdom, and benevolence—which are most venerated among mankind. But if we believe that He has passed to earth—that He has borne our shape, that He has known our sorrows—the connexion becomes yet more intimate and close; we feel as if He could compre-

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hend us better, and compassionate more benignly our infirmities and our griefs. The Christ that has walked the earth, and suffered on the cross, can be more readily pictured to our imagination, and is more familiarly before us, than the Dread Eternal One, who hath the heaven for his throne, and the earth only for his footstool.* And it is this very humanness of connexion, so to speak, between Man and the Saviour, which gives to the Christian religion, rightly embraced, its peculiar sentiment of gentleness and of love,

But somewhat of this connexion, though in a more corrupt degree, marked also the religion of the Greeks; they too believed (at least the multitude) that most of the deities had appeared on earth, and been the actual dispensers of the great benefits of social life. Transferred to heaven, they could more readily understand that those divinities regarded with interest the nations to which they had been made visible, and exercised a permanent influence over the earth, which had been for awhile their home.

Retaining the faith, that the deities had visited the world, the Greeks did not however implicitly believe the fables which degraded them by

* Isaiah lxvi. 1.

our weaknesses and vices. They had, as it were—and this seems not to have been rightly understood by the moderns—two popular mythologies—the first consecrated to poetry, and the second to actual life. If a man were bid to imitate the gods, it was by the virtues of justice, temperance, and benevolence;* and had he obeyed the mandate by emulating the intrigues of Jupiter, or the homicides of Mars, he would have been told by the more enlightened, that those stories were the inventions of the poets; and by the more credulous, that Gods might be emancipated from laws, but men were bound by them—"*Superis sua jura*"†—their own laws to the Gods! It is true, then, that those fables were preserved—were held in popular respect, but the reverence they excited amongst the Greeks was due to a Poetry, which flattered their national pride and enchained their taste, and not to the serious doctrines of their religion. Constantly bearing this distinction in mind, we shall gain consi-

* This Lucian acknowledges unawares, when, in deriding the popular religion, he says that a youth who reads of the Gods in Homer or Hesiod, and finds their various immoralities so highly renowned, would feel no little surprise when he entered the world, to discover that these very actions of the Gods were condemned and punished by mankind.

† Ovid. Metam. lib. ix.

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derable insight, not only into their religion, but into seeming contradictions in their literary history. They allowed Aristophanes to picture Bacchus as a buffoon, and Hercules as a glutton; in the same age in which they persecuted Socrates for neglect of the sacred mysteries, and contempt of the national Gods. To that part of their religion which belonged to the poets, they permitted the fullest license; but to the graver portion of religion—to the existence of the Gods—to a belief in their collective excellence, and providence, and power—to the sanctity of asylums—to the obligation of oaths—they showed the most jealous and inviolable respect. The religion of the Greeks, then, was a great support and sanction of their morals; it inculcated truth, mercy, justice, the virtues most necessary to mankind, and stimulated to them by the rigid and popular belief that excellence was approved, and guilt condemned by the Superior Powers.* And, in that beautiful process, by which the common sense of mankind rectifies the errors of ima-

* So in the celebrated preamble to the laws for the Locrians in Italy, which, though not by Zaleucus, does not the less convey a popular doctrine of the Greek morality, it is declared that men must hold their souls clear from every vice; that the Gods did not accept the offerings of the wicked, but found pleasure only in the just and beneficent actions of the good.—See Diod. Siculus, lib. xii. c. 8.

gination—those fables which subsequent philosophers rightly deemed dishonourable to the gods, and which the superficial survey of modern historians has deemed necessarily prejudicial to morals—had no unworthy effect upon the estimate taken by the Greeks, whether of human actions or of heavenly natures.

XXI. For a considerable period the Greeks did not carry the notion of Divine punishment beyond the grave, except in relation to those audacious criminals who had blasphemed or denied the Gods; it was by punishments in this world that the guilty were afflicted. And this doctrine, if less sublime than that of eternal condemnation, was, I apprehend, on regarding the principles of human nature, equally effective in restraining crime: for our human and short-sighted minds are often affected by punishments, in proportion as they are human and speedy. A penance in the future world is less fearful and distinct, especially to the young and the passionate, than an unavoidable retribution in this. Man, too fondly, or too vainly, hopes, by penitence at the close of his life, to redeem the faults of the commencement, and punishment deferred loses more than half its terrors, and nearly all its certainty.

As long as the Greeks were left solely to

BOOK I. CHAP. I. their mythology, their views of a future state were melancholy and confused. Death was an evil, not a release. Even in their Elysium, their favourite heroes seem to enjoy but a frigid and unenviable immortality. Yet this saddening prospect of the grave rather served to exhilarate life, and stimulate to glory—"Make the most of existence," say their early poets, "for soon comes the dreary Hades!" And placed beneath a delightful climate, and endowed with a vivacious and cheerful temperament, they yielded readily to the precept. Their religion was eminently glad and joyous; even the stern Spartans lost their austerity in their sacred rites, simple and manly though they were,—and the gayer Athenians passed existence in an almost perpetual circle of festivals and holydays.

This uncertainty of posthumous happiness contributed also to the desire of earthly fame. For below at least, their heroes taught them, immortality was not impossible. Bounded by impenetrable shadows to this world, they coveted all that in this world was most to be desired.* A short life is acceptable to Achilles, not if it lead to

* A Mainote hearing the Druses praised for their valour, said, with some philosophy, "They would fear death more if they believed in a Hereafter!"

Elysium, but if it be accompanied with glory. By degrees, however, prospects of a future state, nobler and more august, were opened by their philosophers to the hopes of the Greeks. Thales was asserted to be the first Greek who maintained the immortality of the soul, and that sublime doctrine was thus rather established by the philosopher than the priest.*

XXII. Besides the direct tenets of religion, the Mysteries of the Greeks exercised an influence on their morals, which, though greatly exaggerated by modern speculators, was upon the whole, beneficial, though not from the reasons that have been assigned. As they grew up into their ripened and mature importance—their ceremonial, rather than their doctrine, served to deepen and diffuse a reverence for religious things. Whatever the licentiousness of other mysteries, (especially in Italy,) the Eleusinian rites long retained their renown for purity and decorum; they were jealously watched by the Athenian magistracy, and one of the early Athenian laws enacted that the senate should

* In the time of Socrates, we may suspect, from a passage in Plato's Phædo, that the vulgar were sceptical of the immortality of the soul, and it may be reasonably doubted whether the views of Socrates and his divine disciple were ever very popularly embraced.

BOOK I. CHAP. I. assemble the day after their celebration to inquire into any abuse that might have sullied their sacred character. Nor is it, perhaps, without justice in the later times, that Isocrates lauds their effect on morality, and Cicero their influence on civilisation, and the knowledge of social principles. The lustrations and purifications, at whatever period their sanctity was generally acknowledged, could scarcely fail of salutary effects. They were supposed to absolve the culprit from former crimes, and restore him, a new man, to the bosom of society. This principle is a great agent of morality, and was felt as such in the earlier æra of Christianity: no corruptor is so deadly as despair; to reconcile a criminal with self-esteem is to readmit him, as it were, to virtue.

Even the fundamental error of the religion in point of doctrine, viz. its Polytheism, had one redeeming consequence in the toleration which it served to maintain—the grave evils which spring up from the fierce antagonism of religious opinions, were, save in a few solitary and dubious instances, unknown to the Greeks. And this general toleration, assisted yet more by the absence of a separate caste of priests, tended to lead to Philosophy through the open and unchallenged portals of Religion. Speculations on the gods connected

themselves with bold inquiries into Nature.—Thought let loose in the wide space of creation—no obstacle to its wanderings,—no monopoly of its commerce,—achieved, after many a wild and fruitless voyage, discoveries unknown to the past—of imperishable importance to the future. The intellectual adventurers of Greece planted the first flag upon the shores of Philosophy; for the competition of errors is necessary to the elucidation of truths; and the Imagination indicates the soil which the Reason is destined to culture and possess.

XXIII. While such was the influence of their religion on the morals and the philosophy of the Greeks, what was its effect upon their national genius?

We must again remember that the Greeks were the only nation amongst the more intellectual of that day, who stripped their deities of symbolical attributes, and did not aspire to invent for Gods, shapes differing (save in loftier beauty) from the aspect and form of man. And thus at once was opened to them the realm of Sculpture. The people of the East, sometimes indeed depicting their deities in human forms, did not hesitate to change them into monsters, if the addition of another leg or another arm, a dog's head, or a serpent's tail,

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could better express the emblems they represented. They perverted their images into allegorical deformities; and receded from the Beautiful in proportion as they indulged their false conceptions of the Sublime. Besides, a painter or a sculptor must have a clear idea presented to him, to be long cherished and often revolved, if we desire to call forth all the inspiration of which his genius may be capable; but how could the Eastern artist form a clear idea of an image that should represent the sun entering Aries, or the productive principle of Nature. Such creations could not fail of becoming stiff or extravagant, deformed or grotesque. But to the Greek, a god was something like the most majestic or the most beautiful of his own species. He studied the human shape for his conceptions of the divine. Intent upon the Natural, he ascended to the Ideal.*

If such the effect of the Grecian religion upon Sculpture, similar and equal its influence upon Poetry. The earliest verses of the Greeks appear to have been of a religious, though I see no sufficient reason for asserting that they were therefore of a typical and mystic, character. However

* It is always by connecting the divine shape with the human, that we exalt our creations—so in later times, the saints, the Virgin, and the Christ, awoke the genius of Italian art.

that be, the Narrative succeeding to the Sacred Poetry materialized all it touched. The shadows of Olympus received the breath of Homer, and the gods grew at once life-like, and palpable to men. The traditions which connected the deities with humanity—the genius which divested them of allegory—gave at once to the epic and the tragic poet the supernatural world. The Inhabitants of Heaven itself became individualized—bore, each, a separate character—could be rendered distinct, dramatic, as the creatures of daily life. Thus—an advantage which no moderns have ever possessed—with all the ineffable grandeur of deities was combined all the familiar interest of mortals; and the poet, by preserving the characteristics allotted to each God, might make us feel the associations and sympathies of earth, even when he bore us aloft to the unknown Olympus, or plunged below amidst the shades of Orcus.

The numerous fables mixed with the Grecian creed, sufficiently venerable, as we have seen, not to be disdained, but not so sacred as to be forbidden, were another advantage to the poet. For the traditions of a nation *are* its poetry! And if we moderns, in the German forest, or the Scottish Highlands, or the green English fields, yet find inspiration in the notions

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of fiend, and sprite, and fairy, not acknowledged by our religion, not appended as an apocryphal adjunct to our belief, how much more were those fables adapted to poetry which borrowed not indeed an absolute faith, but a certain shadow, a certain reverence and mystery, from religion! Hence we find that the greatest works of imagination which the Greeks have left us, whether of Homer, of Æschylus, or of Sophocles, are deeply indebted to their mythological legends. The Grecian poetry, like the Grecian religion, was at once half-human, half-divine—majestic, vast, august—household, homely, and familiar. If we might borrow an illustration from the philosophy of Democritus, its earthlier dreams and divinations were indeed the impressions of mighty and spectral images inhabiting the air.*

XXIV. Of the religion of Greece, of its rites and ceremonies, and of its influence upon the moral and intellectual faculties—this—already, I fear, somewhat too prolixly told—is all that, at present, I deem it necessary to say.†

We have now to consider the Origin of Slavery

* See note, p. 67.

† In the later age of philosophy I shall have occasion to return to the subject. And, in the Appendix, with which I propose to complete the work, I may indulge in some

in Greece, an inquiry almost equally important to our accurate knowledge of her polity and manners.

XXV. Wherever we look—to whatsoever period of history—conquest, or the settlement of more enlightened colonizers amidst a barbarous tribe, seems the origin of slavery—modified according to the spirit of the times, the humanity of the victor, or the policy of the lawgiver. The aboriginals of Greece were probably its earliest slaves, *—yet the aboriginals might be also its earliest lords. Suppose a certain tribe to overrun a certain country—conquer and possess it: new settlers are almost sure to be less numerous than the inhabitants they subdue; in proportion as they are the less powerful in number are they likely to be the more severe in authority: they will take away the arms of the vanquished—suppress the right of meetings—make stern and terrible examples against insurgents—and, in a word, quell by the moral constraint of law those whom it would be difficult to control merely by physical force;—the rigidity of the law being in

conjectures relative to the Corybantes, Curetes, Telchines, &c.

* Herodotus (l. vi. c. 137) speaks of a remote time when the Athenians had no slaves. As we have the authority of Thucydides for the superior repose which Attica en-

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ratio to the deficiency of the force. In times semi-civilized, and even comparatively enlightened, conquerors have little respect for the conquered—an immense and insurmountable distinction is at once made between the natives and their lords. All ancient nations seem to have considered that the right of conquest gave a right to the lands of the conquered country. William dividing England among his Normans is but an imitator of every successful invader of ancient times. The new comers having gained the land of a subdued people, that people, in order to subsist, must become the serfs of the land.* The more formidable warriors are mostly slain, or exiled,

joyed, as compared with the rest of Greece—so (her population never having been conquered) slavery in Attica was probably of later date than elsewhere, and we may doubt whether in that favoured land, the slaves were taken from any considerable part of the aboriginal race. I say *considerable* part, for crime or debt would have reduced *some* to servitude. The assertion of Herodotus that the Ionians were indigenous, (and not conquerors as Müller pretends,) is very strongly corroborated by the absence in Attica of a class of serfs like the Penestæ of Thessaly and the Helots of Laconia. A race of conquerors would certainly have produced a class of serfs.

* Or else the land (properly speaking) would remain with the slaves as it did with the Messenians and Helots—but certain proportions of the produce would be the due of the conquerors.

or conciliated by some remains of authority and possessions; the multitude remain the labourers of the soil, and slight alterations of law will imperceptibly convert the labourer into the slave. The earliest slaves appear chiefly to have been the agricultural population. If the possession of the government were acquired by colonizers,*—not so much by the force of arms, as by the influence of superior arts,—the colonizers would in some instances still establish servitude for the multitude, though not under so harsh a name. The laws they would frame for an uncultured and wretched population, would distinguish between the colonizers and the aboriginals, (excepting perhaps only the native chiefs, accustomed arbitrarily to command, though not systematically to enslave, the rest.) The laws for the aboriginal population would still be an improvement on their previous savage and irregulated state—and generations might pass before they would attain a character of severity, or before they made the final and ineffaceable distinction between the freeman and the slave. The perturbed restlessness, and constant migration of tribes in Greece, recorded both by tradition and by history, would consequently tend, at a very remote period, to the institution and diffusion of sla-

* Immigration has not hitherto been duly considered as one of the original sources of slavery.

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very: and the Pelasgi of one tribe would become the masters of the Pelasgi of another. There is, therefore, no necessity to look out of Greece, for the establishment of servitude in that country, by conquest and war. But the peaceful colonization of foreign settlers, would (as we have seen) lead to it by slower and more gentle degrees. And the piracies of the Phœnicians, which embraced the human species as an article of their market, would be an example, more prevalent and constant than their own, to the piracies of the early Greeks. The custom of servitude, thus commenced, is soon fed by new sources. Prisoners of war are enslaved, or, at the will of the victor, exchanged as an article of commerce. Before the interchange of money, we have numerous instances of the barter of prisoners for food and arms. And as money became the medium of trade, so slaves became a regular article of sale and purchase. Hence the origin of the slave-market. Luxury increasing, slaves were purchased not merely for the purposes of labour, but of pleasure. The accomplished musician or the beautiful virgin, was an article of taste or a victim of passion. Thus what it was the tendency of Barbarism to originate, it became the tendency of Civilisation to increase.

Slavery, then, originated first in conquest and

war, piracy, or colonization; secondly, in purchase. There were two other and subordinate sources of the institution—the first was crime, the second poverty. If a free citizen committed a heinous offence he could be degraded into a slave—if he were unable to pay his debts, the creditor could claim his person. Incarceration is merely a remnant and substitute of servitude. The two latter sources failed, as nations became more free. But in Attica it was not till the time of Solon, several centuries after the institution of slavery at Athens, that the right of the creditor to the personal services of the debtor was formally abolished.

A view of the moral effects of slavery—of the condition of the slaves at Athens—of the advantages of the system and its evils—of the light in which it was regarded by the ancients themselves, other and more fitting opportunities will present to us.

XXVI. The introduction of an Hereditary Aristocracy into a particular country, as yet uncivilized, is often simultaneous with that of slavery. A tribe of warriors possess and subdue a territory;—they share its soil with the chief in proportion to their connexion with his person, or their military services and repute—each becomes the lord of lands and slaves—each has privileges above the herd of the con-

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quered population. Suppose, again, that the dominion is acquired by colonizers rather than conquerors; the colonizers, superior in civilisation to the natives,—and regarded by the latter with reverence and awe, would become at once a privileged and noble order. Hence, from either source, an aristocracy permanent and hereditary.* If founded on conquest,

* In a horde of savages never having held communication or intercourse with other tribes, there would indeed be men who by a superiority of physical force would obtain an ascendancy over the rest; but these would not bequeath to their descendants distinct privileges. Exactly because physical power raised the father into rank—the want of physical power would merge his children amongst the herd. Strength and activity cannot be hereditary. With individuals of a tribe as yet attaching value *only* to a swift foot or a strong arm, hereditary privilege is impossible. But if one such barbarous tribe conquer another less hardy, and inhabit the new settlement,—then indeed commences an aristocracy—for amidst communities, though not amongst individuals, hereditary physical powers *can* obtain. One man may not leave his muscles to his son; but one tribe of more powerful conformation than another would generally contrive to transmit that advantage collectively to their posterity. The sense of superiority effected by conquest soon produces too its *moral* effects—elevating the spirit of the one tribe, depressing that of the other, from generation to generation. Those who have denied in conquest or colonization the origin of hereditary aristocracy, appear to me to have founded their reasonings upon the imperfectness of their knowledge of the savage states to which they refer for illustration.

in proportion to the number of the victors, is that aristocracy more or less oligarchical. The extreme paucity of force with which the Dorians conquered their neighbours, was one of the main causes why the governments they established were rigidly oligarchical.

XXVII. Proceeding onward, we find that in this aristocracy are preserved the seeds of liberty and the germ of republicanism. These conquerors, like our feudal barons, being sharers of the profit of the conquest and the glory of the enterprise, by no means allow undivided and absolute authority to their chiefs. Governed by separate laws—distinguished by separate privileges from the subdued community, they are proud of their own freedom, the more it is contrasted with the servitude of the population: they preserve liberty for themselves—they resist the undue assumptions of the king*—and keep

* Accordingly we find in the earliest records of Greek history—in the stories of the Heroic and the Homeric age—that the king possessed but little authority except in matters of war: he was, in every sense of the word, a limited monarch, and the Greeks boasted that they had never known the unqualified despotism of the East. The more, indeed, we descend from the patriarchal times, the more we shall find that colonists established in their settlements those aristocratic institutions which are the earliest barriers against despotism. Colonies are always the first teachers of free institutions. There is no nation probably more attached to monarchy than the English, yet I believe, that if according

BOOK I. CHAP. I. alive that spirit and knowledge of freedom which in after times (as their numbers increase, and they become *a people*, distinct still from the aboriginal natives, who continue slaves,) are transfused from the nobles to the multitude. In proportion as the new race are warlike will their unconscious spirit be that of republicanism; the connexion between martial and republican tendencies was especially recognised by all ancient writers: and the warlike habits of the Hellenes were the cradle of their political institutions. Thus, in conquest, (or sometimes in immigration,) we may trace the origin of an aristocracy,* as of slavery, and thus, by a deeper inquiry, we may find also that the slavery of a population and the freedom of a state have their

to the ancient polity, the English were to migrate into different parts, and establish, in colonizing, their own independent forms of government, there would scarcely be a single such colony not republican!

* In Attica, immigration, not conquest, must have led to the institution of aristocracy. Thucydides observes that owing to the repose in Attica, (the barren soil of which presented no temptation to the conqueror,) the more powerful families expelled from the other parts of Greece, betook themselves for security and refuge to Athens. And from some of these foreigners many of the noblest families in the historical time traced their descent. Before the arrival of these Grecian strangers, Phœnician or Egyptian settlers had probably introduced an aristocratic class.

date, though dim and undeveloped, in the same epoch.

XXVIII. I have thought that the supposed Egyptian colonization of Attica under Cecrops afforded the best occasion to treat of the above matters, not so much in reference to Cecrops himself, as to the migration of Eastern and Egyptian adventurers. Of such migrations the dates may be uncertain—of such adventurers the names may be unknown. But it seems to me impossible to deny the fact of foreign settlements in Greece, in her remoter and more barbarous era, though we may dispute as to the precise amount of the influence they exercised, and the exact nature of the rites and customs they established.

A belief in the early connexion between the Egyptians and Athenians encouraged by the artful vanity of the one, was welcomed by the lively credulity of the other. Many ages after the reputed sway of the Mythical Cecrops, it was fondly imagined that traces of their origin from the solemn Egypt* were yet visible

* Modern inquirers pretend to discover the Egyptian features in the effigy of Minerva on the earliest Athenian coins. Even the golden grasshopper with which the Athenians decorated their hair, and which was considered by their vanity as a symbol of their descent from the soil, has been construed into an Egyptian ornament—a symbol of the ini-

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amongst the graceful and versatile people, whose character was as various, yet as individualized, as their religion—who, viewed in whatsoever aspect of their intellectual history, may appear constantly differing, yet remain invariably Athenian. Whether clamouring in the Agora—whether loitering in the Academe—whether sacrificing to Hercules in the temple—whether laughing at Hercules on the stage—whether with Miltiades arming against the Mede—whether with Demosthenes declaiming against the Macedonian—still unmistakeable, unexampled, original, and alone—in their strength or their weakness, their wisdom or their foibles, their turbulent action, their cultivated repose.

tiated. (Horapoll. Hierogl. lib. ii. c. 55.) "They are the only Grecian people," says Diodorus, "who swear by Isis, and their manners are very conformable to those of the Egyptians;" and so much truth was there at one time (when what was Egyptian became the fashion) in this remark, that they were reproached by the comic writer that their city was 'Egypt and not Athens.' But it is evident that all such resemblance as could have been derived from a handful of Egyptians, previous to the age of Theseus, was utterly obliterated before the age of Solon. Even if we accord to the tale of Cecrops all implicit faith, the Atticans would still remain a Pelasgic population, of which a few early institutions—a few benefits of elementary civilization—and, it may be, a few of the nobler families, were probably of Egyptian origin.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNIMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES TO BE DEDUCED FROM THE ADMISSION THAT CECROPS MIGHT BE EGYPTIAN—ATTIC KINGS BEFORE THESEUS—THE HELLENES—THEIR GENEALOGY—IONIANS AND ACHÆANS PELASGIC—CONTRAST BETWEEN DORIANS AND IONIANS—AMPHICTYONIC LEAGUE.

In allowing that there does not appear sufficient evidence to induce us to reject the tale of the Egyptian origin of Cecrops, it will be already observed, that I attach no great importance to the dispute: and I am not inclined reverently to regard the innumerable theories that have been built on so uncertain a foundation. An Egyptian may have migrated to Attica, but Egyptian influence in Attica was faint and evanescent; —arrived at the first dawn of historical fact, it is with difficulty that we discover the most dubious and shadowy vestiges of its existence. Neither Cecrops nor any other Egyptian in those ages is recorded to have founded a dynasty in Attica— it is clear that none established a different lan-

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guage—and all the boasted analogies of religion fade, on a close examination, into an occasional resemblance between the symbols and attributes of Egyptian and Grecian deities, or a similarity in mystic ceremonies and solemn institutions, which, for the most part, was almost indisputably formed by intercourse between Greece and Egypt in a far later age. Taking the earliest epoch at which history opens, and comparing the whole character of the Athenian people—moral, social, religious, and political—with that of any Egyptian population, it is not possible to select a more startling contrast, or one in which national character seems more indelibly formed, by the early and habitual adoption of utterly opposite principles of thought and action.*

* It has been asserted by some that there is evidence in ancient Attica of the existence of castes similar to those in Egypt and the farther East. But this assertion has been so ably refuted that I do not deem it necessary to enter at much length into the discussion. It will be sufficient to observe, that the assumption is founded upon the existence of four tribes in Attica, the names of which etymological erudition has sought to reduce to titles denoting the different professions of warriors, husbandmen, labourers, and (the last much more disputable and much more disputed) priests. In the first place, it has been cogently remarked by Mr. Clinton, (F. H. vol. i. p. 54,) that this institution of castes has been

I said that Cecrops founded no dynasty: the same traditions that bring him from Egypt very inconsistently attributed to the Greek Ion,—not (as, if Egyptian, it would have been) to the Egyptian Cecrops. 2ndly, If rightly referred to Ion, who did not long precede the Heroic age, how comes it that in that age a spirit the most opposite to that of castes universally prevailed—as all the best authenticated enactments of Theseus abundantly prove? Could institutions calculated to be the most permanent that legislation ever effected, and which in India have resisted every innovation of time, every revolution of war, have vanished from Attica in the course of a few generations?* 3rdly. It is to be observed, that previous to the divisions referred to Ion, we find the same number of four tribes under wholly different names; —under Cecrops, under Cranaus, under Ericthonius or Erectheus, they received successive changes of appellations, none of which denoted professions, but were moulded either from the distinctions of the land they inhabited, or the names of deities they adored. If remodelled by Ion to correspond with distinct professions and occupations, (and where is that social state which does not form different *classes*—a formation widely opposite to that of different *castes?*) cultivated by the majority of the members of each tribe, the name given to each tribe might be but a general title by no means applicable to every individual, and certainly not implying hereditary and indelible distinctions. 4thly. In corroboration of this latter argument there is not a single evidence—a single tradition, that such divisions ever were hereditary. 5thly. In the time of Solon and the Pisistratidæ we find the four Ionic tribes unchanged, but without any features analogous to those of the Oriental castes. (Clinton, F. H. vol. i. p. 55.) 6thly. I shall add what I have before intimated, (see

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give him Cranaus, a native, for his successor. The darkness of fable closes over the interval

note, page 43,) that I do not think it the character of a people accustomed to castes to establish castes mock and spurious in any country which a few of them might visit or colonize. Nay, it is clearly and essentially contrary to such a character, to imagine that a handful of wandering Egyptians, even supposing (which is absurd) that their party contained members of each different caste observed by their countrymen, would have incorporated with such scanty specimens of each caste any of the barbarous natives—they would leave all the natives to a caste by themselves. And an Egyptian Hierophant would as little have thought of associating with himself a Pelasgic priest as a Brahmin would dream of making a Brahmin caste out of a set of Christian clergymen. But if no Egyptian Hierophant accompanied the immigrators, doubly ridiculous is it to suppose, that the latter would have raised any of their own body, to whom such a change of caste would be impious, and still less any of the despised savages, to a rank the most honoured and the most reverent which Egyptian notions of dignity could confer. Even the very lowest Egyptians would not touch any thing a Grecian knife had polluted—the very rigidity with which caste was preserved in Egypt would forbid the propagation of castes amongst barbarians so much below the very lowest caste they could introduce. So far, therefore, from Egyptian adventurers introducing such an institution amongst the general population, their own spirit of caste must rapidly have died away, as intermarriage with the natives, absence from their countrymen, and the active life of an uncivilized home, mixed them up

between the reign of Cranaus and the time of Theseus: if tradition be any guide whatsoever, the history of that period was the history of the human race—it was the gradual passage of men from a barbarous state to the dawn of civilisation—and the national mythi only gather in wild and beautiful fictions round every landmark in their slow and encumbered progress.

It would be very possible, by a little ingenious application of the various fables transmitted to us, to construct a history of imagined conquests and invented revolutions; and thus to win the unmerited praise of throwing a new light upon those remote ages. But when fable is our only basis—no fabric we erect, however imposing in itself, can be rightly entitled to the name of History. And, as in certain ancient chronicles it is recorded merely of undistinguished mo-

with the blood, the pursuits, and the habits of their new associates. Lastly. If these arguments (which might be easily multiplied) do not suffice, I say it is not for me more completely to destroy, but for those of a contrary opinion more completely to substantiate, an hypothesis so utterly at variance with the Athenian character—the acknowledged data of Athenian history; and which would assert the existence of institutions the most difficult to establish;—when established, the most difficult to modify, much more to efface.

narchs that they 'lived and died,' so such an assertion is precisely that which it would be the most presumptuous to make respecting the shadowy kings who, whether in Eusebius or the Parian marble, give dates and chronicles to the legendary gloom which preceded the Heroic Age.

The principal event recorded in these early times, for which there seems some foundation, is a war between Erechtheus of Athens, and the Eleusinians ;—the last assisted or headed by the Thracian Eumolpus. Erechtheus is said to have fallen a victim in this contest. But a treaty afterwards concluded with the Eleusinians confirmed the ascendancy of Athens, and, possibly, by a religious ceremonial, laid the foundation of the Eleusinian mysteries. In this contest is introduced a very doubtful personage, under the appellation of Ion, (to whom I shall afterwards recur,) who appears on the side of the Athenians, and who may be allowed to have exercised a certain influence over them whether in religious rites or political institutions, though he neither attained to the throne, nor seems to have exceeded the peaceful authority of an ally. Upon the dim and confused traditions relative to Ion, the wildest, and most luxuriant speculations have been grafted—prolix to notice, unnecessary to contradict.

II. During this period there occurred—not rapidly, but slowly—the most important revolution of early Greece, viz. the spread of that tribe termed the Hellenes, who gradually established their predominance throughout the land, impressed indelible traces on the national character, and finally converted their own into the national name.

I have already expressed my belief that the Pelasgi were not a barbarous race, speaking a barbarous tongue, but that they were akin to the Hellenes, who spoke the Grecian language, and are considered the proper Grecian family. Even the dubious record of genealogy (which, if fabulous in itself, often under the names of individuals typifies the affinity of tribes) makes the Hellenes kindred to the Pelasgi. Deucalion, the founder of the Hellenes, was of Pelasgic origin—son of Prometheus, and nephew of Atlas, king of the Pelasgic Arcadia.

However this may be, we find the Hellenes driven from Phocis, their earliest recorded seat, by a flood in the time of Deucalion. Migrating into Thessaly, they expelled the Pelasgi; and afterwards spreading themselves through Greece, they attained a general ascendancy over the earlier habitants, enslaving, doubtless, the bulk of the population amongst which they forced a settle-

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ment, but ejecting numbers of the more resolute or the more noble families, and causing those celebrated migrations by which the Pelasgi carried their name and arts into Italy, as well as into Crete and various other isles. On the continent of Greece, when the revolution became complete, the Pelasgi appear to have retained only Arcadia, the greater part of Thessaly,* the land of Dodona and Attica.

There is no reason to suppose the Hellenes more enlightened and civilized than the Pelasgi; but they seem, if only by the record of their conquests, to have been a more stern, warlike, and adventurous branch of the Grecian family. I conclude them, in fact, to have been that part of the Pelasgic race who the longest retained the fierce and vigorous character of a mountain tribe, and who found the nations they invaded in that imperfect period of civilisation which is so favourable to the designs of a conqueror—when the first warlike nature of a predatory tribe is indeed abandoned—but before the discipline, order, and providence of a social community are acquired. Like the Saxons into Britain, the Hellenes were invited† by the different Pelasgic chiefs as auxiliaries, and remained as conquerors. But in other respects they rather

* The Thessali were Pelasgic. † Thucyd. lib. i.

resembled the more knightly and energetic race by whom in Britain the Saxon dynasty was overturned:—the Hellenes were the Normans of antiquity. It is impossible to decide the exact date when the Hellenes obtained the general ascendancy, or when the Greeks received from that Thessalian tribe their common appellation. The Greeks were not termed Hellenes in the time in which the Iliad was composed—they were so termed in the time of Hesiod. But even in the Iliad, the word *Pan*hellenes, applied to the Greeks, testifies the progress of the revolution,* and in the Odyssey, the Hellenic name is no longer limited to the dominion of Achilles.

III. The Hellenic nation became popularly subdivided into four principal families, viz. the Dorians, the Æolians, the Ionians, and Achæans, of which I consider the former two alone genuinely Hellenic. The fable, which makes Dorus, Æolus, and Xuthus, the sons of Hellen, declares that while Dorus was sent forth

* Homer—so nice a discriminator that he dwells upon the barbarous tongue even of the Carians—never seems to intimate any distinction between the language and race of the Pelasgi and Hellenes, yet he wrote in an age when the struggle was still unconcluded, and when traces of any marked difference must have been sufficiently obvious to detect—sufficiently interesting to notice.

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to conquer other lands, Æolus succeeded to the domain of Phthiotis, and records no conquests of his own ; but attributes to his sons the origin of most of the principal families of Greece. If rightly construed, this account would denote that the Æolians remained, for a generation at least subsequent to the first migration of the Dorians, in their Thessalian territories ; and thence splitting into various hordes, descended as warriors and invaders upon the different states of Greece. They appear to have attached themselves to maritime situations, and the wealth of their early settlements is the theme of many a legend. The opulence of Orchomenus is compared by Homer to that of Egyptian Thebes. And in the time of the Trojan war Corinth was already termed 'the wealthy.' By degrees the Æolians became in a great measure blended and intermingled with the Dorians. Yet so intimately connected are the Hellenes and Pelasgi, that even these, the lineal descendants of Hellen through the eldest branch, are no less confounded with the Pelasgic than the Dorian race. Strabo and Pausanias alike affirm the Æolians to be Pelasgic, and in the Æolic dialect we approach to the Pelasgic tongue.

The Æolians.

The Dorians, first appearing in Phthiotis, are found two generations afterwards in the moun-

tainous district of Histiæotis, comprising, within their territory, according to Herodotus, the immemorial Vale of Tempe. Neighboured by warlike hordes, more especially the heroic Lapithæ, with whom their earliest legends record fierce and continued war, this mountain tribe took from nature and from circumstance their hardy and martial character. Unable to establish secure settlements in the fertile Thessalian plains, and ranging to the defiles through which the romantic Peneus winds into the sea, several of the tribe migrated early into Crete, where, though forming only a part of the population of the isle, they are supposed by some to have established the Doric constitution and customs, which in their later settlements served them for a model. Other migrations marked their progress to the foot of Mount Pindus; thence to Dryopis, afterwards called Doris; and from Dryopis to the Peloponnesus; which celebrated migration, under the name of the 'Return of the Heraclidæ,' I shall hereafter more especially describe. I have said that genealogy attributes the origin of the Dorians and that of the Æolians, to Dorus and Æolus, sons of Hellen. This connects them with the Hellenes, and with each other. The adventures of Xuthus, the third son of Hellen, are not re-

The Dorians.

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corded by the legends of Thessaly, and he seems merely a fictitious creation invented to bring into affinity with the Hellenes, the families, properly Pelasgic, of the Achæans and Ionians. It is by writers comparatively recent that we are told that Xuthus was driven from Thessaly by his brothers—that he took refuge in Attica, and on the plains of Marathon built four towns—Œnoe, Marathon, Probalinthus, and Tricorythus,*—that he wedded Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus, king of Attica, and that by her he had two sons, Achæus and Ion. By some we are told that Achæus entering the eastern side of Peloponnesus, founded a dominion in Laconia and Argolis; by others, on the contrary, that he conducted a band, partly Athenian, into Thessaly, and recovered the domains of which his father had been despoiled.† Both these accounts of Achæus, as the representative of the Achæans, are correct in this, that the Achæans had two settlements from remote periods—the one in the south of Thessaly—the other in the Peloponnesus.

The Achæans.

The Achæans were long the most eminent of the Grecian tribes. Possessed of nearly the whole of the Peloponnesus, except, by a singular chance, that part which afterwards bore

* Strabo, viii. † Pausan. viii.

their name, they boasted the warlike fame of the opulent Menelaus, and the haughty Agamemnon, the king of men. The dominant tribe of the Heroic age, the Achæans form the kindred link between the several epochs of the Pelasgic and Hellenic sway—their character indeed Hellenic, but their descent apparently Pelasgic. Dionysius of Halicarnassus derives them from Pelasgus himself, and they existed as Achæans before the Hellenic Xuthus was even born. The legend which makes Achæus the brother of Ion, tends likewise to prove, that if the Ionians were originally Pelasgic, so also were the Achæans. Let us then come to Ion.

Although Ion is said to have given the name of Ionians to the Atticans; yet long before his time the Iaones were among the ancient inhabitants of the country; and Herodotus (the best authority on the subject) declares that the Ionians were Pelasgic and indigenous. There is not sufficient reason to suppose, therefore, that they were Hellenic conquerors or Hellenic settlers. They appear, on the contrary, to have been one of the aboriginal tribes of Attica;—a part of them proceeded into the Peloponnesus, (typified under the migration thither of Xuthus,) and these again returning, (as typified by the arrival of Ion at Athens,) in conjunction with such

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of their fraternity as had remained in their native settlement, became the most powerful and renowned of the several divisions of the Attic population. Their intercourse with the Peloponnesians would lead the Ionians to establish some of the political institutions and religious rites they had become acquainted with in their migration ; and thus may we most probably account for the introduction of the worship of Apollo into Attica, and for that *peaceful* political influence which the mythical Ion is said to have exercised over his countrymen.

At all events, we cannot trace any distinct and satisfactory connexion between this, the most intellectual and brilliant tribe of the Grecian family, and that roving and fortunate Thessalian horde, to which the Hellenes gave the general name, and of which the Dorians were the fittest representative and the most powerful section. Nor, despite the bold assumptions of Müller, is there any evidence of an Hellenic conquest in Attica.* And that

* With all my respect for the deep learning and acute ingenuity of Müller, it is impossible not to protest against the spirit in which much of the History of the Dorians is conceived—a spirit than which nothing can be more dangerous to sound historical inquiry. A vague tradition, a doubtful line, suffice the daring author for proof of a foreign con-

land which, according to tradition and to history, was the early refuge of exiles, derived from the admission and intercourse of strangers, and immigrants, those social and political improvements which in other states have been wrought by conquest.

IV. After the Dorians obtained possession of the Peloponnesus, the whole face of Greece was gradually changed. The return of the Heraclidæ was the true consummation of the Hellenic revolution. The tribes hitherto migratory became fixed in the settlements they acquired. The Dorians rose to the rank of the most powerful race of Greece: and the Ionians, their sole rivals, possessed only on the continent the narrow soil of Attica, though their colonies covered the fertile coast of Asia Minor.

quest, or evidence of a religious revolution. There are German writers who seem to imagine that the new school of history is built on the maxim of denying what is, and explaining what is not! Ion is never recorded as supplanting, or even succeeding an Attic king. He might have introduced the worship of Apollo; but, as Mr. Clinton rightly observes, that worship never superseded the worship of Minerva, who still remained the tutelary divinity of the city. However vague the traditions respecting Ion, they all tend to prove an *alliance* with the Athenians, viz. precisely the reverse of a *conquest* of them.

BOOK I. CHAP. II. Greece, thus reduced to two main tribes, the Doric and the Ionian, historians have justly and generally concurred in noticing between them the strongest and most marked distinctions,—the Dorians grave, inflexible, austere,—the Ionians lively, versatile, prone to change. The very dialect of the one was more harsh and masculine than that of the other; and the music, the dances of the Dorians, bore the impress of their severe simplicity. The sentiment of veneration which pervaded their national character taught the Dorians not only, on the one hand, the firmest allegiance to the rites of religion and a patriarchal respect for age—but, on the other hand, a blind and superstitious attachment to institutions merely on account of their antiquity—and an almost servile regard for birth, producing rather the feelings of clanship than the sympathy of citizens. We shall see hereafter that while Athens established republics, Sparta planted oligarchies. The Dorians were proud of independence, but it was the independence of nobles, rather than of a people. Their severity preserved them long from innovation—no less by what was vicious in its excess, than by what was wise in its principle. With many great and heroic qualities, they were yet harsh to enemies—cruel to dependents—selfish

to allies. Their whole policy was to preserve themselves as they were; if they knew not the rash excesses, neither were they impelled by the generous emotions, which belong to men whose constant aspirations are to be better and to be greater:—they did not desire to be better or to be greater; their only wish was not to be different. They sought in the future nothing but the continuance of the past; and to that past they bound themselves with customs and laws of iron. The respect in which they held their women, as well as their disdain of pleasure, preserved them in some measure from the licentiousness common to states in which women are despised; but the respect had little of the delicacy and sentiment of individual attachment—attachment was chiefly for their own sex.* The Ionians, on the contrary, were susceptible, flexile, and more characterised by the generosity of modern knighthood than the sternness of ancient heroism. Them, not the past, but the future, charmed. Ever eager to advance, they were impatient even of the Good, from desire of the Better. Once urged to democracy—democracy fixed their character, as oligarchy fixed the Spar-

* That connexion which existed throughout Greece, sometimes pure, sometimes perverted, was especially and originally Doric.

tan. For, to change is the ambition of a democracy—to conserve of an oligarchy. The taste, love, and intuition of the Beautiful stamped the Greeks above all nations, and the Ionians above all the Greeks. It was not only that the Ionians were more inventive than their neighbours, but that whatever was beautiful in invention they at once seized and appropriated. Restless, inquisitive, ardent, they attempted all things, and perfected art—searched into all things, and consummated philosophy.

The Ionic character existed everywhere amongst Ionians, but the Doric was not equally preserved amongst the Dorians. The reason is evident. The essence of the Ionian character consisted in the spirit of change—that of the Dorian in resistance to innovation. When any Doric state abandoned its hereditary customs and institutions, it soon lost the Doric character—became lax, effeminate, luxurious—a corruption of the character of the Ionians; but no change could assimilate the Ionian to the Doric; for they belonged to different eras of civilisation—the Doric to the elder, the Ionian to the more advanced. The two races of Scotland have become more alike than heretofore; but it is by making the Highlander resemble the Lowlander—and not by converting the Lowland

citizen into the mountain Gael. The habits of commerce, the substitution of democratic for oligarchic institutions, were sufficient to alter the whole character of the Dorians. The voluptuous Corinth—the trading Ægina (Doric states)—infinitely more resembled Athens than Sparta.

It is, then, to Sparta, that in the historical times we must look chiefly for the representative of the Doric tribe, in its proper and elementary features; and there, pure, vigorous, concentrated, the Doric character presents a perpetual contrast to the Athenian. This contrast continued so long as either nation retained a character to itself;—and (no matter what the pretences of hostility,) was the real and inevitable cause of that enmity between Athens and Sparta, the results of which fixed the destiny of Greece.

Yet, were the contests of that enmity less the contests between opposing tribes than between those opposing principles, which every nation may be said to nurse within itself; viz. the principle to change, and the principle to preserve; the principle to popularize, and the principle to limit, the governing power; here the genius of an oligarchy, there of a people; here adherence to the past, there desire of the future. Each principle produced its excesses, and furnishes a salutary warning. The feuds of

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Sparta and Athens may be regarded as historical allegories, clothing the moral struggles, which, with all their perils and all their fluctuations, will last to the end of time.

V. This period is also celebrated for the supposed foundation of that assembly of the Grecian states, called the Amphictyonic Confederacy. Genealogy attributes its origin to a son of Deucalion, called Amphictyon.* This fable

* Prideaux on the Marbles. The Iones are included in this confederacy; they could not, then, have taken their name from the Hellenic Ion, for Ion was not born at the time of Amphictyon. The name Amphictyon is, however, but a type of the thing amphictyony, or association. Leagues of this kind were probably very common over Greece, springing almost simultaneously out of the circumstances common to numerous tribes, kindred with each other, yet often at variance and feud. A common language led them to establish, by a mutual adoption of tutelary deities, a common religious ceremony, which remained in force after political considerations died away. I take the Amphictyonic league to be one of the proofs of the affinity of language between the Pelasgi and Hellenes. It was evidently made while the Pelasgi were yet powerful and unsubdued by Hellenic influences, and as evidently it could not have been made if the Pelasgi and Hellenes were not perfectly intelligible to each other. Mr. Clinton (F. H. vol. i. 66) assigns a more recent date than has generally been received, to the great Amphictyonic league, placing it between the sixtieth and the eightieth year from the fall of Troy. His reason for not dating it before the former year is, that until then

would intimate an Hellenic origin since Deucalion is the fabled founder of the Hellenes; but out of twelve tribes which composed the confederacy, only three were Hellenic, and the rest Pelasgic. But with the increasing influence of the Dorian Oracle of Delphi, with which it was connected, it became gradually considered an Hellenic institution. It is not possible to decipher the first intention of this league. The meeting was held at two places, near Anthela in the pass of Thermopylæ, and Delphi; at the latter place in the spring, at the former in the autumn. If tradition imputed to Amphictyon the origin of the council, it ascribed to Acrisius, king of Argos,* the formation of its proper power and laws. He is said to have founded one of the assemblies, either that in Delphi or Thermopylæ, (accounts vary,) and to

the Thessali (one of the twelve nations) did not occupy Thessaly. But, it may be observed consistently with the reasonings of that great authority, first, that the Thessali are not included in the lists of the league given by Harpocratio and Libanius; and secondly, that even, granting that the great Amphictyonic assembly of twelve nations did not commence at an earlier period, yet, that that more celebrated Amphictyony might have been preceded by other and less effectual attempts at association, agreeably to the legends of the genealogy. And this Mr. Clinton himself implies.

* Strabo, lib. ix.

BOOK I. CHAP. II. have combined the two, increased the number of the members, and extended the privileges of the body. We can only interpret this legend by the probable supposition, that the date of holding the same assembly at two different places, at different seasons of the year, marks the epoch of some important conjunction of various tribes, and, it may be, of deities hitherto distinct. It might be an attempt to associate the Hellenes with the Pelasgi, in the early and unsettled power of the former race: and this supposition is rendered the more plausible by the evident union of the worship of the Dorian Apollo at Delphi, with that of the Pelasgian Ceres at Thermopylæ.* The constitution of the league was this—Each city belonging to an Amphictyonic state sent usually two deputies—the one called Pylagoras, the other Hieromnemon. The functions of the two deputies seem to have differed, and those of the latter to have related more particularly to whatsoever appertained to religion. On extraordinary occasions more than one Pylagoras was deputed—Athens at one time sent no less than three. But the number of deputies sent did not alter the number of votes in the council. Each city had two votes and no more, no matter how many delegates it employed.

* Müller's Dorians, vol. i.

All the deputies assembled,—solemn sacrifices were offered at Delphi to Apollo, Diana, Latona, and Minerva; at Thermopylæ to Ceres. An oath was then administered, the form of which is preserved to us by Æschines.

"I swear," runs the oath, "never to subvert any Amphictyonic city—never to stop the courses of its waters in peace or in war. Those who attempt such outrages I will oppose by arms; and the cities that so offend I will destroy. If any ravages be committed in the territory of the God, if any connive at such a crime, if any conceive a design hostile to the temple, against them will I use my hands, my feet, my whole power and strength, so that the offenders may be brought to punishment."

Fearful and solemn imprecations on any violation of this engagement followed the oath.

These ceremonies performed, one of the Hieromnemons* presided over the council; to him was entrusted the collecting the votes, the reporting the resolutions, and the power of summoning the general assembly, which was a convention separate from the council, held only on extraordinary occasions, and composed of re-

*. Probably chosen in rotation from the different cities.

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sidents and strangers, whom the solemnity of the meeting congregated in the neighbourhood.

VI. Throughout the historical times we can trace in this league no attempt to combine against the aggression of foreign states, except for the purposes of preserving the sanctity of the temple. The functions of the league were limited to the Amphictyonic tribes: and whether or not its early and undefined, and obscure purpose, was to check wars amongst the confederate tribes, it could not attain even that object. Its offices were almost wholly confined to religion. The league never interfered when one Amphictyonic state exercised the worst severities against the other, curbing neither the ambition of the Athenian fleet, nor the cruelties of the Spartan sword. But upon all matters relative to religion, especially to the worship of Apollo, the Assembly maintained an authority in theory supreme—in practice, equivocal and capricious.

As a political institution, the League contained one vice, which could not fail to destroy its power. Each city in the twelve Amphictyonic tribes, the most unimportant as the most powerful, had the same number of votes. This rendered it against the interest of the greater states (on whom its consideration necessarily depended) to cement or increase its political in-

fluence: and thus it was quietly left to its natural tendency to sacred purposes. Like all institutions which bestow upon man the proper prerogative of God, and affect authority over religious and not civil opinions, the Amphictyonic council was not very efficient in good: even in its punishment of sacrilege, it was only dignified and powerful whenever the interests of the Delphic temple were at stake. Its most celebrated interference was with the town of Crissa, against which the Amphictyons decreed B.C. 595. war; the territory of Crissa was then dedicated to the god of the temple.

VII. But if not efficient in good, the Amphictyonic council was not active in evil. Many causes conspired to prevent the worst excesses to which religious domination is prone,—and this cause in particular. It was not composed of a separate, interested, and permanent class, but of citizens annually chosen from every state, who had a much greater interest in the welfare of their own state than in the increased authority of the Amphictyonic council.* They were priests but for an

* Even the Hieromnemons (or deputies entrusted with religious cares) must have been as a class very inferior in ability to the Pylagoræ; for the first were chosen by lot, the last by careful selection. And thus we learn, in effect, that

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occasion—they were citizens by profession. The jealousies of the various states, the constant change in the delegates, prevented that energy and oneness necessary to any settled design of ecclesiastical ambition. Hence, the real influence of the Amphictyonic council was by no means commensurate with its grave renown; and when, in the time of Philip, it became an important political agent, it was only as the corrupt and servile tool of that able monarch. Still, it long continued, under the panoply of a great religious name, to preserve the aspect of dignity and power, until, in the time of Constantine, it fell amidst the ruins of the faith it had aspired to protect. The creed that became the successor of the religion of Delphi found a mightier Amphictyonic assembly in the conclaves of Rome. The Papal institution possessed precisely those qualities for directing the energies of states, for dictating to the ambition of kings, for obtaining temporal authority under spiritual pretexts—which were wanting to the Pagan.

while the Hieromnemon had the higher grade of dignity, the Pylagoras did the greater share of business.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEROIC AGE—THESEUS—HIS LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCE UPON ATHENS—QUALITIES OF THE GREEK HEROES—EFFECT OF A TRADITIONAL AGE UPON THE CHARACTER OF A PEOPLE.

I. As one who has been journeying through the dark* begins at length to perceive the night breaking away in mist and shadow, so that the forms of things, yet uncertain and undefined, assume an exaggerated and gigantic outline, half lost amidst the clouds,—so now, through the obscurity of fable, we descry the dim and mighty outline of the HEROIC AGE. The careful and sceptical Thucydides has left us, in the commencement of his immortal history, a masterly portraiture of the manners of those times in which individual prowess elevates the possessor to the rank of a demigod;—times of unsettled law, and indistinct control;—of adventure—of excitement;—of daring qualities and lofty crime. We recognise in the picture features familiar to the North: the roving warriors and the pirate kings who scoured the seas, descended upon un-

* Milton, Hist. of Eng. book i.

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guarded coasts, and deemed the exercise of plunder a profession of honour, remind us of the exploits of the Scandinavian Her-Kongr, and the boding banners of the Dane. The seas of Greece tempted to piratical adventures: their numerous isles, their winding bays, and woodclad shores, proffered ample enterprise to the bold—ample booty to the rapacious;—the voyages were short for the inexperienced, the refuges numerous for the defeated. In early ages, valour is the true virtue—it dignifies the pursuits in which it is engaged, and the profession of a pirate was long deemed as honourable in the Ægæan, as amongst the bold rovers of the Scandinavian race.* If the coast was thus exposed to constant incursion and alarm, neither were the interior recesses of the country more protected from the violence of marauders. The various tribes that passed into Greece, to colonize or conquer, dislodged from their settlements many of the inhabitants, who, retreating up the country, maintained themselves by plunder, or avenged themselves by outrage. The many crags and mountains, the caverns and the woods, which diversify the beautiful land of Greece, afforded their natural fortresses to these barbarous hordes.

* No man of rank amongst the old northern pirates was deemed honourable if not a pirate, *gloriam sibi acquirens*, as the Vatzdæla hath it.

The chief who had committed a murder, or aspired unsuccessfully to an unsteady throne, betook himself, with his friends, to some convenient fastness, made a descent on the surrounding villages, and bore off the women or the herds as lust or want excited to the enterprise. No home was safe, no journey free from peril, and the Greeks passed their lives in armour. Thus, gradually, the profession and system of robbery spread itself throughout Greece, until the evil became insufferable—until the public opinion of all the states and tribes, in which society had established laws, was enlisted against the freebooter—until it grew an object of ambition to rid the neighbourhood of a scourge—and the success of the attempt made the glory of the adventurer. Then naturally arose the Race of Heroes—men who volunteered to seek the robber in his hold—and, by the gratitude of a later age, the courage of the knight-errant was rewarded with the sanctity of the demigod. At that time, too, internal circumstances in the different states—whether from the predominance of, or the resistance to, the warlike Hellenes, had gradually conspired to raise a military and fierce aristocracy above the rest of the population; and as arms became the instruments of renown and power, so the wildest feats would lead to the most extended fame.

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II. The woods and mountains of Greece were not then cleared of the first rude aboriginals of nature—wild beasts lurked within its caverns; -wolves abounded every where—herds of wild bulls, the large horns of which Herodotus names with admiration, were common; and even the lion himself, so late as the invasion of Xerxes, was found in wide districts from the Thracian Abdera to the Acarnanian Achelous. Thus, the feats of the early heroes appear to have been mainly directed against the free-booter or the wild beast; and among the triumphs of Hercules are recorded the extermination of the Lydian robbers, the death of Cacus, and the conquest of the lion of Nemea and the boar of Erymanthus.

Hercules himself shines conspicuously forth the great model of these useful adventurers. There is no doubt that a prince,* so named, actually existed in Greece; and under the title of the Theban Hercules, is to be carefully distinguished, both from the god of Egypt and the peaceful Hercules of Phœnicia,† whose

* Most probably more than one prince. Greece has three well-accredited pretenders to the name and attributes even of the Grecian Hercules.

† Herodotus marks the difference between the Egyptian and Grecian deity, and speaks of a temple erected by the

worship was not unknown to the Greeks previous to the labours of his namesake. As the name of Hercules was given to the Theban hero, (originally called Alcæus,) in consequence of his exploits, it may be that his countrymen recognized in his character, or his history, something analogous to the traditional accounts of the Eastern god. It was the custom of the early Greeks to attribute to one man the actions which he performed in concert with others, and the reputation of Hercules was doubtless acquired no less as the leader of an army than by the achievements of his personal prowess. His fame and his success excited the emulation of his contemporaries, and pre-eminent among these ranks the Athenian Theseus.

III. In the romance which Plutarch has bequeathed to us, under the title of a "History of Theseus," we seem to read the legends of our own fabulous days of chivalry. The adventures of an Amadis, or a Palmerin, are not more knightly nor more extravagant.

According to Plutarch, Ægeus, king of Athens,

Phœnicians to Hercules, when they built Thasus, five hundred years before the son of Amphitryon was known to the Greeks. The historian commends such of the Greeks as erected two temples to the divinity of that name, worshipping in the one as to a god, but in the other observing only the rites as to a hero.—B. ii. c. 13, 14.

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having no children, went to Delphi to consult the oracle how that misfortune might be repaired. He was commanded not to approach any woman till he returned to Athens ; but the answer was couched in mystic and allegorical terms, and the good king was rather puzzled than enlightened by the reply. He betook himself therefore to Trœzene, a small town in Peloponnesus, founded by Pittheus, of the race of Pelops, a man eminent in that day for wisdom and sagacity. He communicated to him the oracle, and besought his interpretation. Something there was in the divine answer which induced Pittheus to draw the Athenian king into an illicit intercourse with his own daughter—Æthra. The princess became with child, and before his departure from Trœzene, Ægeus deposited a sword and a pair of sandals in a cavity concealed by a huge stone,* and left injunctions with Æthra, that should the fruit of their intercourse prove a male child, and able, when grown up, to remove the stone, she should send him privately to Athens with the sword and sandals, in proof of his birth ; for Ægeus had a brother named Pallas, who, having a large family of

* Plut. in Vit. Thes.—Apollod. l. 3. This story is often borrowed by the Spanish romance writers, to whom Plutarch was a copious fountain of legendary fable.

sons, naturally expected, from the failure of the direct line, to possess himself, or his children, of the Athenian throne; and the king feared, should the secret of his intercourse with Æthra be discovered before the expected child had arrived to sufficient strength to protect himself, that either by treason or assassination the sons of Pallas would despoil the rightful heir of his claim to the royal honours. Æthra gave birth to Theseus, and Pittheus concealed the dishonour of his family, by asserting that Neptune, the god most honoured at Trœzene, had condescended to be the father of the child:—the gods were very convenient personages in those days. As the boy grew up he evinced equal strength of body and nobleness of mind; and at length the time arrived when Æthra communicated to him the secret of his birth, and led him to the stone which concealed the tokens of his origin. He easily removed it, and repaired by land to Athens.

At that time, as I have before stated, Greece was overrun by robbers: Hercules had suppressed them for awhile; but the Theban hero was now at the feet of the Lydian Omphale, and the freebooters had reappeared along the mountainous recesses of the Peloponnesus; the journey by land was therefore not only longer, but far more perilous, than a voyage by sea, and Pittheus

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earnestly besought his grandson to prefer the latter. But it was the peril of the way that made its charm in the eyes of the young hero, and the fame of Hercules had long inspired his dreams by night,* and his thoughts by day. With his father's sword, then, he repaired to Athens. Strange and wild were the adventures that befell him. In Epidauria he was attacked by a celebrated robber, whom he slew, and whose club he retained as his favourite weapon. In the Isthmus, Sinnis another bandit, who had been accustomed to destroy the unfortunate travellers who fell in his way, by binding them to the boughs of two pine trees, (so that when the trees, released, swung back to their natural position, the victim was torn asunder, limb by limb,) was punished by the same death he had devised for others; and here occurs one of those anecdotes illustrative of the romance of the period, and singularly analogous to the chivalry of Northern fable, which taught deference to women, and rewarded by the smiles of the fair the exploits of the bold. Sinnis, 'the pine-bender,' had a daughter remarkable for beauty, who concealed herself amidst the shrubs and rushes in terror of the victor. Theseus discovered her, praying, says Plutarch, in childish innocence or

* Plut. in Vit. Thes.

folly, to the plants and bushes, and promising, if they would shelter her, never to destroy or burn them. A graceful legend, that reminds us of the rich inventions of Spenser. But Theseus, with all gentle words and soothing vows allured the maiden from her retreat, and succeeded at last in obtaining her love, and its rewards.

Continued adventures—the conquest of Phæa, a wild sow, (or a female robber, so styled from the brutality of her life)—the robber Sciron cast headlong from a precipice—Procrustes stretched on his own bed—attested the courage and fortune of the wanderer, and at length he arrived at the banks of the Cephisus. Here he was saluted by some of the Phytalidæ, a sacred family descended from Phytalus, the beloved of Ceres, and was duly purified from the blood of the savages he had slain. Athens was the first place at which he was hospitably entertained. He arrived at an opportune moment; the Colchian Medea, of evil and magic fame, had fled from Corinth and taken refuge with Ægeus, whose affections she had ensnared. By her art she promised him children to supply his failing line, and she gave full trial to the experiment by establishing herself the partner of the royal couch. But it was not likely that the numerous sons of

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Pallas would regard this connexion with indifference, and faction and feud reigned throughout the city. Medea discovered the secret of the birth of Theseus ; and, resolved by poison to rid herself of one who would naturally interfere with her designs on Ægeus, she took advantage of the fear and jealousies of the old king, and persuaded him to become her accomplice in the premeditated crime. A banquet, according to the wont of those hospitable times, was given to the stranger. The king was at the board, the cup of poison at hand, when Theseus, wishing to prepare his father for the welcome news he had to divulge, drew the sword, or cutlass, which Ægeus had made the token of his birth, and prepared to carve with it the meat that was set before him. The sword caught the eye of the king—he dashed the poison to the ground, and after a few eager and rapid questions, recognised his son in his intended victim. The people were assembled—Theseus was acknowledged by the king, and received with joy by the multitude, who had already heard of the feats of the hero. The traditionary place where the poison fell was still shown in the time of Plutarch. The sons of Pallas ill brooked the arrival and acknowledgment of this unexpected heir to the throne. They armed

themselves and their followers, and prepared for war. But one half their troops, concealed in ambush, were cut off by Theseus, (instructed in their movements by the treachery of a herald,) and the other half, thus reduced, were obliged to disperse. So Theseus remained the undisputed heir to the Athenian throne.

IV. It would be vain for the historian, but delightful for the poet, to follow, at length, this romantic hero through all his reputed enterprises. I can only rapidly sketch the more remarkable. I pass, then, over the tale how he captured alive the wild bull of Marathon, and come at once to that expedition to Crete, which is indissolubly entwined with immortal features of love and poetry. It is related that Androgeus, a son of Minos, the celebrated King of Crete, and by his valour worthy of such a sire, had been murdered in Attica; some suppose by the jealousies of Ægeus, who appears to have had a singular distrust of all distinguished strangers. Minos retaliated by a war which wasted Attica, and was assisted in its ravages by the pestilence and the famine. The oracle of Apollo, which often laudably reconciled the quarrels of princes, terminated the contest by enjoining the Athenians to appease the just indignation of Minos. They dispatched, therefore, ambassadors to Crete, and

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consented, in token of submission, to send every ninth year a tribute of seven virgins and seven young men. The little intercourse that then existed between states, conjoined with the indignant grief of the parents, at the loss of their children, to exaggerate the evil of the tribute. The hostages were said by the Athenians to be exposed in an intricate labyrinth, and devoured by a monster, the creature of unnatural intercourse, half-man half-bull; but the Cretans, certainly the best authority in the matter, stripped the account of the fable, and declared that the labyrinth was only a prison in which the youths and maidens were confined on their arrival—that Minos instituted games in honour of Androgeus, and that the Athenian captives were the prize of the victors. The first victor was the chief of the Cretan army named Taurus, and he, being fierce and unmerciful, treated the slaves he thus acquired with considerable cruelty. Hence the origin of the labyrinth and the Minotaur. And Plutarch, giving this explanation of the Cretans, cites Aristotle to prove that the youths thus sent were not put to death by Minos, but retained in servile employments, and that their descendants afterwards passed into Thrace, and were called Bottiæans. We must suppose, therefore, in consonance not only with these ac-

counts, but the manners of the age, that the tribute was merely a token of submission, and the objects of it merely considered as slaves.*

Of Minos himself all accounts are uncertain. There seems no sufficient ground to doubt, indeed, his existence, nor the extended power which, during his reign, Crete obtained in Greece. It is most probable that it was under Phœnician influence that Crete obtained its maritime renown; but there is no reason to suppose Minos himself Phœnician.

After the return of Theseus the time came when the tribute to Crete was again to be rendered. The people murmured their dissatisfaction. 'It was the guilt of Ægeus,' said they, 'which caused the wrath of Minos, yet Ægeus alone escaped its penalty; their lawful children were sacrificed to the Cretan barbarity, but the doubtful and illegitimate stranger, whom Ægeus had adopted, went safe and free.' Theseus generously appeased these popular tumults: he insisted on being himself included in the seven.

V. Twice before had this human tribute been

* Mr. Müller's ingenious supposition, that the tribute was in fact a religious ceremony, and that the voyage of Theseus had originally no other meaning than the landings at Naxos and Delos, is certainly credible, but not a whit more so than, and certainly not so simple, as the ancient accounts in Plu-

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sent to Crete ; and in token of the miserable and desperate fate which, according to vulgar belief, awaited the victims, a black sail had been fastened to the ship. But, this time, Ægeus, inspired by the cheerful confidence of his son, gave the pilot a white sail, which he was to hoist, if, on his return, he bore back Theseus in safety : if not, the black was once more to be the herald of an unhappier fate. It is probable that Theseus did not esteem this among the most dangerous of his adventures. At the court of the wise Pittheus, or in the course of his travels, he had, doubtless, heard enough of the character of Minos, the greatest and most sagacious monarch of his time, to be convinced that the son of the Athenian king would have little to fear from his severity. He arrived at Crete, and obtained the love of Ariadne, the daughter of Minos. Now follows a variety of contradictory accounts, the most probable and

tarch ; as with mythological, so with historical legends, it is better to take the plain and popular interpretation whenever it seems conformable to the manners of the times, than to construe the story by newly-invented allegories. It is very singular that that is the plan which every writer on the early chronicles of France and England would adopt, and yet which so few writers agree to pursue when they are to treat of the obscure records of the Grecks

least poetical of which are given by Plutarch; but as he concludes them all by the remark that none are of certainty, it is a needless task to repeat them: it suffices to relate, that either with, or without the consent of Minos, Theseus departed from Crete, in company with Ariadne, and that by one means or the other he thenceforth freed the Athenians from the payment of the accustomed tribute. As it is obvious that with the petty force with which, by all accounts, he sailed to Crete, he could not have conquered the powerful Minos in his own city, so it is reasonable to conclude, as one of the traditions hath it, that the king consented to his alliance with his daughter, and in consequence of that marriage waived all further claim to the tribute of the Athenians.*

Equal obscurity veils the fate of the loving Ariadne; but the supposition which seems least objectionable is, that Theseus was driven by storm either on Cyprus or Naxos, and Ariadne being then with child, and rendered ill by the violence of the waves, was left on shore by her lover, while he returned to take charge of his

* Plutarch cites Clidemus in support of another version of the tale, somewhat less probable, viz. that, by the death of Minos and his son Deucalion, Ariadne became possessed of the throne, and that she remitted the tribute.

vessel ; that she died in childbed, and that Theseus on his return was greatly afflicted, and instituted an annual festival in her honour. While we adopt the story most probable in itself, and most honourable to the character of the Athenian hero, we cannot regret the various romance which is interwoven with the tale of the unfortunate Cretan, since it has given us some of the most beautiful inventions of poetry ;—the Labyrinth love-lighted by Ariadne—the Cretan maid deserted by the stranger with whom she fled—left forlorn and alone on the Naxian shore—and consoled by Bacchus and his satyr-horde.

VI. Before he arrived at Athens, Theseus rested at Delos, where he is said to have instituted games, and to have originated the custom of crowning the victor with the palm. Meanwhile Ægeus waited the return of his son. On the Cecropian rock that yet fronts the sea, he watched the coming of the vessel, and the waving of the white sail : the masts appeared—the ship approached—the white sail was not visible : in the joy and the impatience of the homeward crew, the pilot had forgotten to hoist the appointed signal, and the old man in despair threw himself from the rock, and was dashed to pieces. Theseus received the news of his father's death with sor-

row and lamentation. His triumph and return were recorded by periodical festivals, in which the fate of Ægeus was typically alluded to, and the vessel of thirty oars with which he had sailed to Crete was preserved by the Athenians to the times of Demetrius the Phalerean—so often new-pieced and repaired, that it furnished a favourite thesis to philosophical disputants, whether it was or was not the *same* vessel which Theseus had employed.

VII. Possessed of the supreme power, Theseus now bent his genius to the task of legislation, and in this part of his life we tread upon firmer ground, because the most judicious of the ancient historians* expressly attributes to the son of Ægeus those enactments which so mainly contributed to consolidate the strength and union of the Athenian people.

Although Cecrops is said to have brought the tribes of Attica under one government, yet it will be remembered that he had divided the territory into twelve districts, with a fortress or capital to each. By degrees these several districts had become more and more distinct from each other, and in many cases of emergency it was difficult to obtain a general assembly, or a general concurrence, of the people; nay, differences had

* Thucydid. b. ii. c. 15.

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often sprung up between each tribe, which had been adjusted, not as among common citizens, by law, but as among jealous enemies, by arms and bloodshed. It was the master policy of Theseus to unite these petty commonwealths in one state. He applied in person, and by all the arts of persuasion, to each tribe: the poor he found ready enough to listen to an invitation which promised them the shelter of a city, and the protection of a single government from the outrage of many tyrants: the rich and the powerful were more jealous of their independent, scattered, and, as it were, feudal life. But these he sought to conciliate by promises that could not but flatter that very prejudice of liberty which naturally at first induced them to oppose his designs. He pledged his faith to a constitution which should leave the power in the hands of the many. He himself, as monarch, desired only the command in war, and in peace the guardianship of laws he was equally bound to obey. Some were induced by his persuasions, others by the fear of his power, until at length he obtained his object. By common consent he dissolved the towns'-corporations and councils in each separate town, and built in Athens one common Prytaneum or Council-Hall, existent still in the time of Plutarch. He united the

scattered streets and houses of the citadel and the new town that had grown up along the plain by the common name of 'Athens,' and instituted the festival of the Panathenæa, in honour of the guardian goddess of the city, and as a memorial of the confederacy. Adhering then to his promises, he set strict and narrow limits to the regal power, created, under the name of Eupatrids or Well-born, an hereditary nobility, and divided into two orders (the husbandmen and mechanics) the remainder of the people. The care of religion, the explanation of the laws, and the situations of magistrates, were the privilege of the nobles. He thus laid the foundation of a free, though aristocratic, constitution—according to Aristotle, the first who surrendered the absolute sway of royalty, and receiving from the rhetorical Isocrates the praise that it was a contest which should give most, the people of power, or the king of freedom. As an extensive population was necessary to a powerful state, so Theseus invited to Athens all strangers willing to share in the benefits of its protection, granting them equal security of life and law; and he set a demarcation to the territory of the state by the boundary of a pillar erected in the Isthmus, dividing Ionia from Peloponnesus. The Isthmian games in honour of Neptune were also the invention of Theseus.

VIII. Such are the accounts of the legislative enactments of Theseus. But of these we must reject much. We may believe from the account of Thucydides that jealousies among some Attic towns—which might either possess, or pretend to, an independence never completely annihilated by Cecrops and his successors, and which the settlement of foreigners of various tribes and habits would have served to increase—were so far terminated as to induce submission to the acknowledged supremacy of Athens as the Attic capital; and that the right of justice and even of legislation which had before been the varying prerogative of each separate town, (to the evident weakening of the supreme and regal authority,) was now concentrated in the common council house of Athens. To Athens, as to a capital, the Eupatrids of Attica would repair as a general residence.* The city increased in population and importance, and from this period Thucydides dates the enlargement of the ancient city, by the addition of the Lower Town. That Theseus voluntarily lessened the royal power it is not necessary to

* But many Athenians preferred to a much later age the custom of living without the walls—scattered over the country. (Thucyd. lib. ii. 15.) We must suppose it was with them as with the moderns—the rich and the great generally preferred the capital, but there were many exceptions.

believe. In the Heroic age a warlike race had sprung up, whom no Grecian monarch appears to have attempted to govern arbitrarily in peace, though they yielded implicitly to his authority in war. Himself on a newly-won and uncertain throne, it was the necessity as well as the policy of Theseus to conciliate the most powerful of his subjects. It may also be conceded, that he more strictly defined the distinctions between the nobles and the remaining classes, whether yeomen or husbandmen, mechanics or strangers; and it is recorded, that the honours and the business of legislation were the province of the Eupatrids. It is possible that the people might be occasionally convened—but it is clear that they had little, if any, share in the government of the state. But the mere establishment and confirmation of a powerful aristocracy, and the mere collection of the population into a capital, were sufficient to prepare the way for far more democratic institutions than Theseus himself contemplated or designed. For centuries afterwards an oligarchy ruled in Athens; but, free itself, that oligarchy preserved in its monopoly the principles of liberty expanding in their influence with the progress of society. The democracy of Athens was not an ancient, yet not a sudden, constitution. It developed

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itself slowly, unconsciously, continuously—passing the allotted orbit of royalty, oligarchy, aristocracy, timocracy, tyranny, till at length it arrived at its dazzling zenith, blazed—waned—and disappeared.

After the successful issue of his legislative attempts, we next hear of Theseus less as the monarch of history, than as the hero of song. On these later traditions, which belong to fable, it is not necessary to dwell. Our own *Cœur de Lion* suggests no improbable resemblance to a spirit cast in times yet more wild and enterprising, and without seeking interpretations, after the fashion of allegory or system, of each legend, it is the most simple hypothesis, that Theseus really departed in quest of adventure from a dominion that afforded no scope for a desultory and eager ambition; and that something of truth lurks beneath many of the rich embellishments which his wanderings and exploits received from the exuberant poetry and the rude credulity of the age. During his absence, Menestheus of the royal race of Attica, and who, Plutarch simply tells us, was the first of mankind that undertook the profession of a demagogue, ingratiated himself with the people, or rather with the nobles. The absence of a king is always the nurse of

seditions, and Menestheus succeeded in raising so powerful a faction against the hero, that on his return Theseus was unable to preserve himself in the government, and pouring forth a solemn curse on the Athenians, departed to Scyros, where he either fell by accident from a precipice, or was thrown down by the king. His death at first was but little regarded; in after-times, to appease his ghost and expiate his curse, divine honours were awarded to his memory; and in the most polished age of his descendants, his supposed remains, indicated by an eagle, in the skeleton of a man of giant stature, with a lance of brass and a sword by his side, were brought to Athens in the galley of Cimon, hailed by the shouts of a joyous multitude, 'as if the living Theseus were come again.'

X. I have not altogether discarded, while I have abridged, the legends relating to a hero, who undoubtedly exercised considerable influence over his country and his time, because in those legends we trace, better than we could do by dull interpretations equally unsatisfactory though more prosaic, the effigy of the Heroic age—not unillustrative of the poetry and the romance, which at once formed and indicated important features in the character of the Athenians. Much of the national spirit of

BOOK I. CHAP. III. every people, even in its most civilized epochs, is to be traced to the influence of that age which may be called the Heroic. The wild adventurers of the early Greece tended to humanize even in their excesses. It is true that there are many instances of their sternness, ferocity, and revenge;—they were insolent from the consciousness of surpassing strength;—often cruel from that contempt of life common to the warlike. But the darker side of their character is far less commonly presented to us than the brighter—they seem to have been alive to generous emotions, more readily than any other race so warlike in an age so rude—their affections were fervid as their hatreds—their friendships more remarkable than their feuds. Even their ferocity was not, as with the Scandinavian heroes, a virtue and a boast—their public opinion honoured the compassionate and the clement. Thus Hercules is said first to have introduced the custom of surrendering to the enemy the corpses of their slain; and mildness, justice, and courtesy, are no less his attributes than invincible strength and undaunted courage. Traversing various lands, these Paladins of an elder chivalry acquired an experience of different governments and customs, which assisted on their return to

polish and refine the admiring tribes which their achievements had adorned. Like the knights of a Northern mythus, their duty was to punish the oppressor and redress the wronged, and they thus fixed in the wild elements of unsettled opinion a recognised standard of generosity and of justice. Their deeds became the theme of the poets, who sought to embellish their virtues and extenuate their offences. Thus, certain models, not indeed wholly pure or excellent, but bright with many of those qualities which ennoble a national character, were set before the emulation of the aspiring and the young;—and the traditional fame of a Hercules, or a Theseus, assisted to inspire the souls of those who, ages afterwards, broke the Mede at Marathon, and arrested the Persian might in the Pass of Thermopylæ. For, as the spirit of a poet has its influence on the destiny and character of nations, so TIME itself hath his own poetry, preceding and calling forth the poetry of the human genius, and breathing inspirations, imaginative and imperishable, from the great deeds and gigantic images of an ancestral and traditionary age.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUCCESSORS OF THESEUS—THE FATE OF CODRUS—THE EMIGRATION OF NILEUS—THE ARCHONS—DRACO.

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I. THE reputed period of the Trojan war follows close on the age of Hercules and Theseus; and Menestheus, who succeeded the latter hero on the throne of Athens, led his countrymen to the immortal war. Plutarch and succeeding historians have not failed to notice the expression of Homer, in which he applies the word *demus* or 'people' to the Athenians, as a proof of the popular government established in that state. But while the line has been considered an interpolation, as late at least as the time of Solon, we may observe that it was never used by Homer in the popular and political sense it afterwards received. And he applies it, not only to the state of Athens, but to that of Ithaca, certainly no democracy.*

* For other instances in which the same word is employed by Homer, see Clinton's Fast Hell. vol. i. introduction ix.

The demagogue-king appears to have been a man of much warlike renown and skill, and is mentioned as the first who marshalled an army in rank and file. Returning from Troy, he died in the Isle of Melos, and was succeeded by Demophoon, one of the sons of Theseus, who had also fought with the Grecian army in the Trojan siege. In his time a dispute between the Athenians and Argives was referred to fifty arbiters of each nation, called Ephetæ, the origin of the court so styled, and afterwards re-established with new powers by Draco. To Demophoon, succeeded his son Oxyntes, and to Oxyntes, Aphidas, murdered by his bastard brother, Thymœtes. Thymœtes was the last of the race of Theseus who reigned in Athens. A dispute arose between the Bœotians and the Athenians respecting the confines of their several territories; it was proposed to decide the difference by a single combat between Thymœtes and the king of the Bœotians. Thymœtes declined the contest. A Messenian exile, named Melanthus, accepted it, slew his antagonist by a stratagem, and deposing the cowardly Athenian, obtained the sovereignty of Athens. With Melanthus, who was of the race of Nestor, passed into Athens two nobles of the same house, Pæon and Alcmæon, who were the

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founders of the Pæonids and Alcmæonids, two powerful families, whose names often occur in the subsequent history of Athens, and who, if they did not create a new order of nobility, at least sought to confine to their own families the chief privileges of that which was established.

II. Melanthus was succeeded by his son Codrus, a man whose fame finds more competitors in Roman than Grecian history. During his reign the Dorians invaded Attica. They were assured of success by the Delphian oracle, on condition that they did not slay the Athenian king. Informed of the response, Codrus disguised himself as a peasant, and repairing to the hostile force, sought a quarrel with some of the soldiers, and was slain by them not far from the banks of the Ilissus.* The Athenians sent to demand the body of their king, and the Dorians, no longer hoping of success, since the condition of the oracle was thus violated, broke up their encampment, and relinquished their design. Some of the Dorians had already by night secretly entered the city and concealed themselves within its walls; but as the day dawned, and they found themselves abandoned by their associates, and surrounded by the foe, they fled to the

* Paus. l. 1. c. 19; l. ii. c. 18.

Areopagus and the altars of the Furies; the refuge was deemed inviolable, and the Dorians were dismissed unscathed—a proof of the awe already attached to the rites of sanctuary.* Still, however, this invasion was attended with the success of what might have been the principal object of the invaders. Megara,† which had hitherto been associated with Attica, was now seized by the Dorians, and became afterwards a colony of Corinth. This gallant but petty state had considerable influence on some of the earlier events of Athenian history.

III. Codrus was the last of the Athenian kings. The Athenians affected the motives of reverence to his memory as an excuse for forbidding to the illustrious martyr the chance of an unworthy successor. But the aristocratic constitution had been morally strengthened by the extinction of the race of Theseus and the jealousy of a foreign line; and the abolition of the monarchy was rather caused by the ambition of the nobles than the popular venera-

* Paus. l. vii. c. 25. An oracle of Dodona had forwarned the Athenians of the necessity of sparing the suppliants.

† Herod. (lib. v. 76) cites this expedition of the Dorians for the establishment of a colony at Megara, as that of their first incursion into Attica.

tion for the patriotism of Codrus. The name of king was changed into that of archon, (magistrate or governor;) the succession was still made hereditary, but the power of the ruler was placed under new limits, and he was obliged to render to the people, or rather to the Eupatrids, an account of his government, whenever they deemed it advisable to demand it.

IV. Medon, the son of Codrus, was the first of these perpetual archons. In that age bodily strength was still deemed an essential virtue in a chief; and Nileus, a younger brother of Medon, attempted to depose the archon, on no other pretence than that of his lameness.

A large portion of the people took advantage of the quarrel between the brothers to assert that they would have no king but Jupiter. At length Medon had recourse to the oracle, which decided in his favour, and Nileus, with all the younger sons of Codrus, and accompanied by a numerous force, departed from Athens, and colonised that part of Asia Minor celebrated in history under the name of Ionia. The rise, power, and influence of these Asiatic colonies, we shall find a more convenient opportunity to notice. Medon's reign, thus freed from the more stirring spirits of his time, appears to have been prosperous and popular; it

was an æra in the ancient world, when the lameness of a ruler was discovered to be unconnected with his intellect! Then follows a long train of archons—peaceable and obscure. During a period estimated at three hundred years, the Athenians performed little that has descended to posterity—brief notices of petty skirmishes, and trivial dissensions with their neighbours, alone diversify that great interval. Meanwhile, the Ionian colonies rose rapidly into eminence and power. At length, on the death of Alcmæon—the thirteenth and last perpetual archon—a new and more popular change was introduced into the government. The sway of the archon was limited to ten years. This change slowly prepared the way to changes still more important. Hitherto the office had been confined to the two Neleid houses of Codrus and Alcmæon;—in the archonship of Hippomones it was thrown open to other distinguished families; and at length, on the death of Eryxias, the last of the race of Codrus, the failure of that ancient house in its direct line (indirectly it still continued, and the blood of Codrus flowed through the veins of Solon) probably gave excuse and occasion for abolishing the investment of the supreme power in one magistrate; nine were appointed, each with the

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title of archon, (though the name was more emphatically given to the chief of the number,) and each with separate functions. This institution continued to the last days of Athenian freedom. This change took place in the 24th Olympiad.

B.C. 621. V. In the 39th Olympiad, Draco being chief archon, was deputed to institute new laws. He was a man concerning whom history is singularly brief; we know only that he was of a virtuous and austere renown—that he wrote a great number of verses, as little durable as his laws.* As for the latter—when we learn that they were stern and bloody beyond precedent—we have little difficulty in believing that they were inefficient.

VI. I have hastened over this ambiguous and uninteresting period with a rapidity I trust all but antiquaries will forgive. Hitherto we have been in the land of shadow—we approach the

* Suidas. One cannot but be curious as to the motives and policy of a person, virtuous as a man, but so relentless as a lawgiver. Although Draco was himself a noble, it is difficult to suppose that laws so stern and impartial would not operate rather against the more insolent and encroaching class, than against the more subordinate ones. The attempt shows a very unwholesome state of society, and went far to produce the democratic action which Solon represented, rather than created.

light. The empty names of apocryphal beings which we have enumerated are, for the most part, as spectres, so dimly seen as to be probably delusions—invoked to please a fanciful curiosity, but without an object to satisfy the reason or excuse the apparition. If I am blamed for not imitating those who have sought, by weaving together disconnected hints and subtle conjectures, to make a history from legends, to overturn what has been popularly believed, by systems equally contradictory, though more learnedly fabricated;—if I am told that I might have made the chronicle thus briefly given extend to a greater space, and sparkle with more novel speculation, I answer that I am writing the history of men and not of names—to the people and not to scholars—and that no researches, however elaborate, no conjectures, however ingenious, could draw any real or solid moral from records which leave us ignorant both of the characters of men, and the causes of events. What matters who was Ion, or whence the first worship of Apollo? what matter revolutions or dynasties, ten or twelve centuries before Athens emerged from a deserved obscurity?—they had no influence upon her after greatness; enigmas impossible to solve—if solved, but scholastic frivolities.

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Fortunately, as we desire the history of a people, so it is when the Athenians become a people, that we pass at once from tradition into history.

I pause to take a brief survey of the condition of the rest of Greece prior to the age of Solon.

CHAPTER V.

A GENERAL SURVEY OF GREECE AND THE EAST PREVIOUS TO THE TIME OF SOLON—THE GRECIAN COLONIES—THE ISLES—BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE STATES ON THE CONTINENT—ELIS AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

I. On the north, Greece is separated from Macedonia by the Cambunian mountains; on the west spreads the Ionian, on the south and east the Ægæan, Sea. Its greatest length is two hundred and twenty geographical miles; its greatest width one hundred and forty. No contrast can be more startling than the speck of earth which Greece occupies in the map of the world, compared to the space claimed by the Grecian influences in the history of the human mind. In that contrast itself is the moral which Greece has left us—nor can volumes more emphatically describe the triumph of the Intellectual over the Material. But as nations, resembling individuals, do not become

BOOK I. CHAP. V. illustrious from their mere physical proportions; as in both, renown has its moral sources; so in examining the causes which conduced to the eminence of Greece, we cease to wonder at the insignificance of its territories, or the splendour of its fame. Even in geographical circumstance Nature had endowed the country of the Hellenes with gifts which amply atoned the narrow girth of its confines. The most southern part of the continent of Europe, it contained within itself all the advantages of sea and land; its soil, though unequal in its product, is for the most part fertile and abundant; it is intersected by numerous streams, and protected by chains of mountains; its plains and valleys are adapted to every product most necessary to the support of the human species; and the sun that mellows the fruits of nature is sufficiently tempered not to relax the energies of man. Bordered on three sides by the sea, its broad and winding extent of coast early conduced to the spirit of enterprise; and, by innumerable bays and harbours, proffered every allurement to that desire of gain, which is the parent of commerce and the basis of civilisation. At the period in which Greece rose to eminence it was in the very centre of the most advanced and flourishing states of Europe and of Asia. The attention of

its earlier adventurers was directed not only to the shores of Italy, but to the gorgeous cities of the East, and the wise and hoary institutions of Egypt. If from other nations they borrowed less than has been popularly supposed, the very intercourse with those nations alone sufficed to impel and develope the faculties of an imitative and youthful people;—while, as the spirit of liberty broke out in all the Grecian states, producing a restless competition both among the citizens in each city and the cities one with another, no energy was allowed to sleep until the operations of an intellect, perpetually roused and never crippled, carried the universal civilisation to its height. Nature herself set the boundaries of the river and the mountain to the confines of the several states—the smallness of each concentrated power into a focus—the number of all heightened emulation to a fever. The Greek cities had, therefore, above all other nations, the advantage of a perpetual collision of mind—a perpetual intercourse with numerous neighbours, with whom intellect was ever at work—with whom experiment knew no rest. Greece, taken collectively, was the only free country (with the exception of Phœnician states and colonies, perhaps, equally civilized) in the midst of enlightened despotisms; and in the ancient world, despotism invented and sheltered the

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arts which liberty refined and perfected:* Thus considered, her greatness ceases to be a marvel

* Hume utters a sentiment exactly the reverse: "To expect," says he, in his Essay on the rise of Arts and Sciences, "that the arts and sciences should take their first rise in a monarchy, is to expect a contradiction;" and he holds, in a subsequent part of the same Essay, that though republics originate the arts and sciences, they may be transferred to a monarchy. Yet this sentiment is utterly at variance with the fact; in the despotic monarchies of the East were the *elements* of the arts and sciences; it was to republics they were transferred, and republics perfected them. Hume, indeed, is often the most incautious and uncritical of all writers. What can we think of an author who asserts that a refined taste succeeds best in monarchies, and then refers to the indecencies of Horace and Ovid as an example of the reverse in a republic,—as if Ovid and Horace had not lived under a monarchy! and throughout the whole of this theory he is as thoroughly in the wrong. By refined taste he signifies an avoidance of immodesty of style. Beaumont and Fletcher, Rochester, Dean Swift, wrote under monarchies—their pruriencies are not excelled by any republican authors of ancient times. What ancient authors equal in indelicacy the French romances from the time of the Regent of Orleans to Louis XVI.? By all accounts, the despotism of China is the very sink of indecencies, whether in pictures or books. Still more, what can we think of a writer who says, that "the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent, unless one may except the Banquet of Xenophon and the Dialogues of Lucian?" What! has he forgotten Aristophanes? Has he forgotten Plautus? No—but their pleasantry is not excellent to his taste; and he tacitly agrees with Horace in censuring the "coarse railleries and cold jests" of the Great Original of Moliere!

—the very narrowness of her dominions was a principal cause of it—and to the most favourable circumstances of nature were added circumstances the most favourable of time.

If, previous to the age of Solon, we survey the histories of Asia, we find that quarter of the globe subjected to great and terrible revolutions, which confined and curbed the power of its various despotisms. Its empires for the most part built up by the successful invasions of Nomad tribes, contained in their very vastness the elements of dissolution. The Assyrian Nineveh had been conquered by the Babylonians and the Medes; and Babylon, under the new Chaldæan dynasty, was attaining the dominant power of western Asia. The Median monarchy was scarce recovering from the pressure of barbarian foes, and Cyrus had not as yet arisen to establish the throne of Persia. In Asia Minor, it is true, the Lydian empire had attained to great wealth and luxury, and was the most formidable enemy of the Asiatic Greeks, yet it served to civilize them even while it awed. The commercial and enterprising Phœnicians, now foreboding the march of the Babylonian king, who had "taken counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth," at all

B.C. 606.

BOOK I. CHAP. V.

times were precluded from the desire of conquest by their divided states,* formidable neighbours, and trading habits.

In Egypt a great change had operated upon the ancient character; the splendid dynasty of the Pharaohs was no more. The empire, rent into an oligarchy of twelve princes, had been again united under the sceptre of one by the swords of Grecian mercenaries; and Neco, the son of the usurper—a man of mighty intellect and vast designs—while he had already adulterated the old Egyptian customs with the spirit of Phœnician and Greek adventure, found his field of action only in the East. As yet, then, no foreign enemy had disturbed the early rise of the several states of Greece; they were suffered to form their individual demarcations tranquilly and indelibly; and to progress to that point between social amenities and chivalric hardihood, when, while war is the most sternly encountered, it the most rapidly enlightens. The peace that follows the first war of a half-civilized nation is usually the great æra of its intellectual eminence.

B.C. 616. Defeats Josiah. B.C. 609.

* Which forbade the concentration of power necessary to great conquests. Phœnicia was not one state, it was a confederacy of states; so, for the same reason, Greece, admirably calculated to resist, was ill fitted to invade.

II. At this time the colonies in Asia Minor were far advanced in civilisation beyond the Grecian continent. Along the western coast of that delicious district—on a shore more fertile, under a heaven more bright, than those of the parent states—the Æolians, Ionians, and Dorians, in a remoter age, had planted settlements and founded cities. The Æolian colonies (the result of the Dorian immigrations) occupied the coasts of Mysia and Caria—on the mainland twelve cities—the most renowned of which were Cyme and Smyrna; and the islands of the Hecatonnesi, Tenedos, and Lesbos, the last illustrious above the rest, and consecrated by the Muses of Sappho and Alcæus. They had also settlements about Mount Ida. Their various towns were independent of each other, but Mitylene, in the Isle of Lesbos, was regarded as their common capital. The trade of Mitylene was extensive—its navy formidable.

Probably commenced under Penthilus, son of Orestes, about 1068 B.C.

The Ionian colonies, founded subsequently to the Æolian, but also (though less immediately) a consequence of the Dorian revolution, were peopled not only by Ionians, but by various nations, led by the sons of Codrus. In the islands of Samos and Chios, on the southern coast of Lydia, where Caria stretches to the north, they

Probably commenced about 988 B.C.

* For the dates of these migrations see Fast. Hell. vol. i.

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established their voluptuous settlements known by the name "Ionia." Theirs were the cities of Myus, and Priene, Colophon, Ephesus, Lebedus, Teos, Clazomene, Erythræ, Phocæa, and Miletus:—in the islands of Samos and Chios were two cities of the same name as the isles themselves. The chief of the Ionian cities at the time on which we enter, and second perhaps in trade and in civilisation to none but the great Phœnician states, was the celebrated Miletus—founded first by the Carians—exalted to her renown by the Ionians. Her streets were the mart of the world; along the Euxine and the Palus Mæotis, her ships rode in the harbours of a hundred of her colonies. Here broke the first light of the Greek philosophy. But if inferior to this, their imperial, city, each of the Ionian towns had its title to renown. Here flourished already Music, and Art, and Song. The trade of Phocæa extended to the coasts of Italy and Gaul. Ephesus had not yet risen to its meridian—it was the successor of Miletus and Phocæa. These Ionian states, each independent of the other, were united by a common sanctuary—the Panionium (Temple of Neptune,) which might be seen far off on the headland of that Mycale afterwards the witness of one of the proudest feats of Grecian valour. Long free, Ionia became tributary to

Naval dominion of Miletus commenced B.C. 750.

the Lydian kings, and afterwards to the great Persian monarchy.

In the islands of Cos and Rhodes, and on the southern shores of Caria, spread the Dorian colonies—planted subsequently to the Ionian by gradual immigrations. If in importance and wealth the Æolian were inferior to the Ionian colonies, so were the Dorian colonies to the Æolian. Six cities (Ialyssus, Camirus, and Lindus, in Rhodes; in Cos, a city called from the island; Cnidus and Halicarnassus, on the mainland) were united, like the Ionians, by a common sanctuary—the Temple of Apollo Triopius.

Besides these colonies—the Black Sea, the Palus Mæotis, the Propontis, the coasts of Lower Italy, the eastern and southern shores of Sicily,* Syracuse, the mightiest of Grecian offspring, and the daughter of Corinth,—the African Cyrene,—not enumerating settlements more probably referable to a later date, attested the active spirit and extended navigation of early Greece.

The effect of so vast and flourishing a colonisation was necessarily prodigious upon the moral and intellectual spirit of the mother land. The seeds scattered over the earth bore their harvests to her garner.

* To a much later period in the progress of this work I reserve a somewhat elaborate view of the history of Sicily.

BOOK I. CHAP. V. About 800 B.C.

III. Among the Grecian isles, the glory of Minos had long passed from Crete. The monarchical form of government had yielded to the republican, but in its worst shape—the oligarchic. But the old Cretan institutions still lingered in the habits of private life;—while the jealousies and commotions of its several cities, each independent, exhausted within itself those powers, which, properly concentrated and wisely directed, might have placed Crete at the head of Greece.

Cyprus, equally favoured by situation with Crete, and civilized by the constant influence of the Phœnicians, once its masters, was attached to its independence, but not addicted to warlike enterprise. It was, like Crete, an instance of a state which seemed unconscious of the facilities for command and power which it had received from nature. The island of Corcyra (a Corinthian colony) had not yet arrived at its day of power. This was reserved for that period when, after the Persian war, it exchanged an oligarchic for a democratic action—which wore away, indeed, the greatness of the country in its struggles for supremacy, obstinately and fatally resisted by the antagonist principle.

Of the Cyclades—those beautiful daughters of Crete—Delos, sacred to Apollo, and possessed principally by the Ionians, was the most emi-

nent. But Paros boasted not only its marble quarries, but the valour of its inhabitants, and the vehement song of Archilochus.

Eubœa, neighbouring Attica, possessed two chief cities, Eretria and Chalcis, governed apparently by timocracies, and frequently at war with each other. Though of importance as connected with the subsequent history of Athens, and though the colonisation of Chalcis was considerable, the fame of Eubœa was scarcely proportioned to its extent as one of the largest islands of the Ægæan;—and was far outshone by the small and rocky Ægina—the rival of Athens, and at this time her superior in maritime power and commercial enterprise. Colonized by Epidaurus, Ægina soon became independent; but the violence of party, and the power of the oligarchy, while feeding its energies prepared its downfall.

IV. As I profess only to delineate in this work the rise and fall of the Athenians, so I shall not deem it at present necessary to do more than glance at the condition of the continent of Greece previous to the time of Solon. Sparta alone will demand a more attentive survey.

Taking our station on the citadel of Athens, we behold, far projecting into the sea, the neighbouring country of Megaris, with Megara for its city. It was originally governed by twelve

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kings; the last, Hyperion, being assassinated, its affairs were administered by magistrates, and it was one of the earliest of the countries of Greece which adopted republican institutions. Nevertheless, during the reigns of the earlier kings of Attica, it was tributary to them.* We have seen how the Dorians subsequently wrested it from the Athenians;† and it underwent long and frequent warfare for the preservation of its independence from the Dorians of Corinth. About the year 640, a powerful citizen named Theagenes wrested the supreme power from the stern aristocracy which the Dorian conquest had bequeathed, though the yoke of Corinth was shaken off. The tyrant—for such was the appellation given to a successful usurper—was subsequently deposed, and the democratic government restored; and although that democracy was one of the most turbulent in Greece, it did not prevent this little state from ranking among the most brilliant actors in the Persian war.

V. Between Attica and Megaris, we survey

* Pausanias, in corroboration of this fact, observes, that Peribœa, the daughter of Alcathous, was sent with Theseus with tribute into Crete.

† When, according to Pausanias, it changed its manners and its language.

the Isle of Salamis—the right to which we shall find contested both by Athens and the Megarians.

VI. Turning our eyes now to the land, we may behold, bordering Attica—from which a mountainous tract divides it—the mythological Bœotia, the domain of the Phœnician Cadmus, and the birth-place of Polynices and Œdipus. Here rise the immemorial mountains of Helicon and Cithæron—the haunt of the Muses; here Pentheus fell beneath the raging bands of the Bacchanals, and Actæon endured the wrath of the Goddess of the Woods; here rose the walls of Thebes to the harmony of Amphion's lyre—and still, in the time of Pausanias, the Thebans showed, to the admiration of the traveller, the place where Cadmus sowed the dragon-seed—the images of the witches sent by Juno to lengthen the pains of Alcmena—the wooden statue wrought by Dædalus—and the chambers of Harmonia and of Semele. No land was more sanctified by all the golden legends of poetry—and of all Greece no people was less alive to the poetical inspiration. Devoted, for the most part, to pastoral pursuits, the Bœotians were ridiculed by their lively neighbours for an inert and sluggish disposition—a reproach which neither the song of Hesiod and Pindar, nor the glories of Thebes and Platæa, were sufficient to

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repel. As early as the twelfth century (B. C.) royalty was abolished in Bœotia—its territory was divided into several independent states, of which Thebes was the principal, and Platæa and Chæronea among the next in importance. Each had its own peculiar government; and, before the Persian war oligarchies had obtained the ascendency in these several states. They were united in a league, of which Thebes was the head; but the ambition and power of that city kept the rest in perpetual jealousy, and weakened, by a common fear and ill-smothered dissensions, a country otherwise, from the size of its territories* and the number of its inhabitants, calculated to be the principal power of Greece. Its affairs were administered by eleven magistrates, or Bœotarchs, elected by four assemblies held in the four districts into which Bœotia was divided.

VII. Beyond Bœotia lies Phocis, originally colonized, according to the popular tradition, by Phocus from Corinth. Shortly after the Dorian irruption, monarchy was abolished and republican institutions substituted. In Phocis were more than twenty states independent of the general Phocian government, but united in a

* In length fifty-two geographical miles, and about twenty-eight to thirty-two broad.

congress held at stated times on the road between Daulis and Delphi. Phocis contained also the city of Crissa, with its harbour, and the surrounding territory, inhabited by a fierce and piratical population, and the sacred city of Delphi, on the south-west of Parnassus.

VIII. Of the Oracle of Delphi I have before spoken—it remains only now to point out to the reader the great political cause of its rise into importance. It had been long established, but without any very brilliant celebrity, when happened that Dorian revolution which is called the 'Return of the Heraclidæ.' The Dorian conquerors had early steered their course by the advice of the Delphian Oracle, which appeared artfully to favour their pretensions, and which, adjoining the province of Doris, had imposed upon them the awe, and perhaps felt for them the benevolence, of a sacred neighbour. Their ultimate triumph not only gave a striking and supreme repute to the Oracle, but secured the protection and respect of a race now become the most powerful of Greece. From that time no Dorian city ever undertook an enterprise without consulting the Pythian voice;—the example became general, and the shrine of the deity was enriched by offerings not only from the piety of Greece, but the credulous awe of barbarian-

kings. Perhaps, though its wealth was afterwards greater, its authority was never so unquestioned, as for a period dating from about a century preceding the laws of Solon to the end of the Persian war. Delphi was wholly an independent state, administered by a rigid aristocracy;* and though protected by the Amphictyonic council, received from its power none of those haughty admonitions with which the defenders of a modern church have often insulted their charge. The temple was so enriched by jewels, statues, and vessels of gold, that at the time of the invasion of Xerxes its wealth was said to equal in value the whole of the Persian armament; and so wonderful was its magnificence, that it appeared more like the Olympus of the gods than a human temple in their honour. On the ancient Delphi stands now the monastery of Kastri. But still you discover the terraces once crowded by fanes — still, amidst gloomy chasms, bubbles the Castalian spring—and yet permitted to the pilgrim's gaze is the rocky bath of the Pythia, and the lofty halls of the Corycian Cave.

IX. Beyond Phocis lies the country of the

* A council of five presided over the business of the oracle, composed of families who traced their descent from Deucalion.

Locrians, divided into three tribes independent of each other—the Locri Ozolæ, the Locri Opuntii, the Locri Epicnemidii. The Locrians (undistinguished in history) changed in early times royal for aristocratic institutions.

The nurse of the Dorian race—the small province of Doris—borders the Locrian territory to the south of Mount Œta; while to the west of Locris spreads the mountainous Ætolia, ranging northward from Pindus to the Ambracian Bay. Ætolia gave to the Heroic age the names of Meleager and Diomed, but subsequently fell into complete obscurity. The inhabitants were rude and savage, divided into tribes, nor emerged into importance until the latest æra of the Grecian history. The political constitution of Ætolia, in the time referred to, is unknown.

X. Acarnania, the most western country of central Greece, appears little less obscure at this period than Ætolia, on which it borders; with Ætolia it arose into eminence in the Macedonian epoch of Greek history.

XI. Northern Greece contains two countries —Thessaly and Epirus.

In Thessaly was situated the long and lofty mountain of the divine Olympus, and to the more southern extreme rose Pindus, and Œta. Its inhabitants were wild and hardy, and it pro-

duced the most celebrated breed of horses in Greece. It was from Thessaly that the Hellenes commenced their progress over Greece—it was in the kingdoms of Thessaly that the race of Achilles held their sway ; but its later history was not calculated to revive the fame of the Homeric hero ; it appears to have shared but little of the republican spirit of the more famous states of Greece. Divided into four districts, (Thessaliotis, Pelasgiotis, Phthiotis, and Hestiæotis,) the various states of Thessaly were governed either by hereditary princes, or nobles of vast possessions. An immense population of serfs, or penestæ, contributed to render the chiefs of Thessaly powerful in war and magnificent in peace. Their common country fell into insignificance from the want of a people—but their several courts were splendid from the wealth of a nobility.

XII. Epirus was of somewhat less extent than Thessaly, and far less fertile ; it was inhabited by various tribes, some Greek, some barbarian, the chief of which was the Molossi, governed bykings who boasted their descent from Achilles. Epirus has little importance or interest in history until the sun of Athens had set, during the ascendency of the Macedonian kings. It contained the independent State of Ambracia, peopled from Corinth, and governed by repub-

lican institutions. Here also were the sacred oaks of the oracular Dodona.

XIII. We now come to the states of the Peloponnesus, which contained eight countries.

Beyond Megaris lay the territory of Corinth, its broad bay adapted it for commerce, of which it availed itself early; even in the time of Homer it was noted for its wealth. It was subdued by the Dorians, and for five generations the royal power rested with the descendants of Aletes,* of the family of the Heraclidæ. By a revolution, the causes of which are unknown to us, the kingdom then passed to Bacchis, the founder of an illustrious race, (the Bacchiadæ,) who reigned first as kings, and subsequently as yearly magistrates under the name of Prytanes. In the latter period, the Bacchiadæ were certainly not a single family, but a privileged class —they intermarried only with each other,—the administrative powers were strictly confined to them—and their policy, if exclusive, seems to have been vigorous and brilliant. This government was destroyed, as under its sway the people increased in wealth and importance; a popular movement headed by Cypselus, a man of birth and fortune, replaced an able oligarchy B. C. 655.

* Great grandson to Antiochus, son of Hercules.—*Pausanias*, l. 2. c. 4.

BOOK I. CHAP. V. B.C. 625.

by an abler demagogue. Cypselus was succeeded by the celebrated Periander, a man, whose vices were perhaps exaggerated, whose genius was indisputable. Under his nephew, Psammetichus, Corinth afterwards regained its freedom. The Corinthians, in spite of every change in the population, retained their luxury to the last, and the epistles of Alciphron, in the second century after Christ, note the ostentation of the few and the poverty of the many. At the time now referred to, Corinth—the Genoa of Greece—was high in civilisation, possessed of a considerable naval power, and in art and commerce was the sole rival on the Grecian continent to the graceful genius and extensive trade of the Ionian colonies.

XIV. Stretching from Corinth, along the coast opposite Attica, we behold the ancient Argolis. Its three principal cities were Argos, Mycenæ, and Epidaurus. Mycenæ, at the time of the Trojan war, was the most powerful of the states of Greece; and Argos, next to Sicyon, was reputed the most ancient. Argolis suffered from the Dorian revolution, and shortly afterwards the regal power, gradually diminishing, lapsed into republicanism.* Argolis contained

* But at Argos, at least, the name, though not the substance, of the kingly government was extant as late as the Persian war.

various independent states—one to every principal city.

XV. On the other side of Corinth, almost opposite Argolis, we find the petty state of Sicyon. This was the most ancient of the Grecian states, and was conjoined to the kingdom of Agamemnon at the Trojan war. At first it was possessed by Ionians, expelled subsequently by the Dorians, and not long after seems to have lapsed into a democratic republic. A man of low birth, Orthagoras, obtained the tyranny, and it continued in his family for a century, the longest tyranny in Greece, because the gentlest. Sicyon was of no marked influence at the period we are about to enter, though governed by an able tyrant, Clisthenes, whose policy it was to break the Dorian nobility, while uniting, as in a common interest, popular laws and regal authority.

XVI. Beyond Sicyon we arrive at Achaia. We have already seen that this district was formerly possessed by the Ionians, who were expelled by some of the Achæans who escaped the Dorian yoke. Governed first by a king, it was afterwards divided into twelve republics, leagued together. It was long before Achaia appeared on that heated stage of action, which allured the more restless spirits of Athens and Lacedæmon.

XVII. We now pause at Elis, which had also felt the revolution of the Heraclidæ, and was possessed by their comrades the Ætolians.

The state of Elis underwent the general change from monarchy to republicanism; but republicanism in its most aristocratic form;—growing more popular at the period of the Persian wars, but without the convulsions which usually mark the progress of democracy. The magistrates of the commonwealth were the superintendents of the Sacred Games. And here, diversifying this rapid, but perhaps to the general reader somewhat tedious, survey of the political and geographical aspect of the states of Greece, we will take this occasion to examine the nature and the influence of those celebrated contests, which gave to Elis its true title to immortality.

XVIII. The origin of the Olympic Games is lost in darkness. The legends which attribute their first foundation to the times of demigods and heroes, are so far consonant with truth, that exhibitions of physical strength made the favourite diversion of that wild and barbarous age which is consecrated to the Heroic. It is easy to perceive that the origin of athletic games preceded the date of civilisation; that, associated with occasions of festival, they, like fes-

tivals, assumed a sacred character, and that, whether first instituted in honour of a funeral, or in celebration of a victory, or in reverence to a god,—religion combined with policy to transmit an inspiring custom to a more polished posterity. And though we cannot literally give credit to the tradition which assigns the restoration of these games to Lycurgus, in concert with Iphitus, king of Elis, and Cleosthenes of Pisa, we may suppose at least that to Elis, to Pisa, and to Sparta, the institution was indebted for its revival.

The Dorian Oracle of Delphi gave its sanction to a ceremony, the restoration of which was intended to impose a check upon the wars and disorders of the Peloponnesus. Thus authorized, the festival was solemnized at the Temple of Jupiter, at Olympia, near Pisa, a town in Elis. It was held every fifth year; it lasted four days. It consisted in the celebration of games in honour of Jupiter and Hercules. The interval between each festival was called an Olympiad. After the fiftieth Olympiad, the whole management of the games, and the choice of the judges, was monopolized by the Eleans. Previous to each festival, officers, deputed by the Eleans, proclaimed a sacred truce. Whatever hostilities were existent in

B.C. 580.

BOOK I. CHAP. V. Greece, terminated for the time; sufficient interval was allowed to attend and to return from the games.*

During this period the sacred territory of Elis was regarded as under the protection of the gods—none might traverse it armed. The Eleans arrogated indeed the right of a constant sanctity to perpetual peace; and the right, though sometimes invaded, seems generally to have been conceded. The people of this territory became, as it were, the guardians of a sanctuary; they interfered little in the turbulent commotions of the rest of Greece; they did not fortify their capital; and, the wealthiest people of the Peloponnesus, they enjoyed their opulence in tranquillity;—their holy character contenting their ambition. And a wonderful thing it was in the midst of those warlike, stirring, restless tribes—that solitary land, with its plane grove bordering the Alpheus, adorned with innumerable and hallowed monuments and statues—unvisited by foreign wars and civil commotion—a whole state one temple!

At first only the foot-race was exhibited;

* Those who meant to take part in the athletic exercises were required to attend at Olympia thirty days previous to the games, for preparation and practice.

afterwards were added wrestling, leaping, quoiting, darting, boxing, a more complicated species of foot race, (the Diaulus and Dolichus,) and the chariot and horse races. The Pentathlon was a contest of five gymnastic exercises combined. The chariot races* preceded those of the riding horses, as in Grecian war the use of chariots preceded the more scientific employment of cavalry, and were the most attractive and splendid part of the exhibition. Sometimes there were no less than forty chariots on the ground. The rarity of horses, and the expense of their training, confined, without any law to that effect, the chariot race to the highborn and the wealthy. It was consistent with the vain Alcibiades to decline the gymnastic contests in which his physical endowments might have ensured him success, because his competitors were not the equals to the long-descended heir of the Alcmæonidæ. In the equestrian contests his success was unprecedented. He brought seven chariots into the field, and bore off at the same time the first, second,

* It would appear by some Etruscan vases found at Veii, that the Etruscans practised *all* the Greek games—leaping, running, cudgel-playing, &c., and were not restricted, as Niebuhr supposes, to boxing and chariot races.

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and fourth prize.* Although women,† with the exception of the priestesses of the neighbouring fane of Ceres, were not permitted to witness the engagements, they were yet allowed to contend by proxy in the chariot races; and the ladies of Macedon especially availed themselves of the privilege. No sanguinary contest with weapons, no gratuitous ferocities, no struggle between man and beast, (the graceless butcheries of Rome,) polluted the festival dedicated to the Olympian god. Even boxing with the cestus was less esteemed than the other athletic exercises, and was excluded from the games exhibited by Alexander in his Asiatic invasions.‡. Neither did any of those haughty

* It, however, diminishes the real honour of the chariot race, that the owner of the horses usually won by proxy.

† The indecorum of attending contests where the combatants were unclothed, was a sufficient reason for the exclusion of females. The priestess of Ceres, the Mighty Mother, was accustomed to regard all such indecorums as symbolical, and had therefore refined away any remarkable delicacy.

‡ Plut. in Alex. When one of the combatants, with the cestus, killed his antagonist by running the ends of his fingers through his ribs, he was ignominiously expelled the stadium. The cestus itself, made of thongs of leather, was evidently meant not to increase the severity of the blow, but for the prevention of foul play, by the antagonists laying hold of each other, or using the open hand. I believe that the iron

assumptions of lineage, or knightly blood, which characterise the feudal tournament, distinguish between Greek and Greek. The equestrian contests were indeed, from their expense, limited to the opulent, but the others were impartially free to the poor as to the rich, the peasant as the noble,—the Greeks forbade monopoly in glory. But although thus open to all Greeks, the stadium was impenetrably closed to barbarians. Taken from his plough, the boor obtained the garland, for which the monarchs of the East were held unworthy to contend, and to which the kings of the neighbouring Macedon were forbidden to aspire till their Hellenic descent had been clearly proved.* Thus periodically were the several states reminded of their common race, and thus the national name and character were solemnly preserved: Yet, like the Amphictyonic league, while the Olympic fes-

bands and leaden plummets were *Roman* inventions, and unknown at least till the later Olympic games. Even in the pancratium, the fiercest of all the contests—for it seems to have united wrestling with boxing (a struggle of physical strength, without the precise and formal laws of the boxing and wrestling matches,) it was forbidden to kill an enemy, to injure his eyes, or to use the teeth.

* Even to the foot-race, in which many of the competitors were of the lowest rank, the son of Amyntas, king of Macedon, was not admitted till he had proved an Argive descent. He was an unsuccessful competitor.

tival served to maintain the great distinction between foreigners and Greeks, it had but little influence in preventing the hostile contests of Greeks themselves. The very emulation between the several states stimulated their jealousy of each other: and still, if the Greeks found their countrymen in Greeks, they found also in Greeks their rivals.

We can scarcely conceive the vast importance attached to victory in these games;* it not only immortalized the winner, it shed glory upon his tribe. It is curious to see the different honours characteristically assigned to the conqueror in different states. If Athenian, he was entitled to a place by the magistrates in the Prytaneum; if a Spartan, to a prominent station in the field. To conquer at Elis was renown for life, "no less illustrious to a Greek than consulship to a Roman!"† The haughtiest

* Herodotus relates an anecdote, that the Eleans sent deputies to Egypt, vaunting the glories of the Olympic games, and inquiring if the Egyptians could suggest any improvement. The Egyptians asked if the citizens of Elis were allowed to contend, and, on hearing that they were, declared it was impossible they should not favour their own countrymen, and consequently that the games must lead to injustice—a suspicion not verified.

† Cic. Quæst. Tusc. 11, 17.

nobles, the wealthiest princes, the most successful generals, contended for the prize.* And the prize (after the seventh Olympiad) was a wreath of the wild olive!

Numerous other and similar games were established throughout Greece. Of these, next to the Olympic, the most celebrated, and the only national ones, were the Pythian at Delphi, the Nemean in Argolis, the Isthmian in Corinth; yet elsewhere the prize was of value; at all the national ones it was but a garland—a type of the eternal truth, that praise is the only guerdon of renown. The olive-crown was nothing!—the shouts of assembled Greece—the showers of herbs and flowers—the banquet set apart for the victor—the odes of imperishable poets—the public register which transmitted to posterity his name—the privilege of a statue in the Altis—the return home through a breach in the walls (denoting by a

* Nero (when the glory had left the spot) drove a chariot of ten horses in Olympia, out of which he had the misfortune to tumble. He obtained other prizes in other Grecian games, and even contended with the heralds as a crier. The vanity of Nero was astonishing, but so was that of most of his successors. The Roman emperors were the sublimest coxcombs in history. In men born to stations which are beyond ambition, all aspirations run to seed.

noble metaphor, "that a city which boasts such men has slight need of walls,"*) the first seat in all public spectacles; the fame, in short, extended to his native city—bequeathed to his children—confirmed by the universal voice wherever the Greek civilisation spread;—*this* was the true olive-crown to the Olympic conqueror!

No other clime can furnish a likeness to these festivals: Born of a savage time, they retained the vigorous character of an age of heroes, but they took every adjunct from the arts and the graces of civilisation. To the sacred ground flocked all the power, and the rank, and the wealth, and the intellect, of Greece. To that gorgeous spectacle came men inspired by a nobler ambition than that of the arena. Here the poet and the musician could summon an audience to their art. If to them it was not a field for emulation,† it was at least a theatre of display.

XIX. The uses of these games were threefold;

* Plut. in Sympos.

† It does not appear that at Elis there were any of the actual *contests* in music and song which made the character of the Pythian games. But still it was a common *exhibition* for the cultivation of every art. Sophist, and historian, and orator, poet and painter, found their mart in the Olympic fair.

—1st. The uniting all Greeks by one sentiment of national pride, and the memory of a common race; 2ndly. The inculcation of hardy discipline —of physical education throughout every state, by teaching that the body had its honours as well as the intellect—a theory conducive to health in peace—and in those ages when men fought hand to hand, and individual strength and skill were the nerves of the army, to success in war; but, 3rdly, and principally its uses were in sustaining and feeding as a passion, as a motive, as an irresistible incentive—the desire of glory! That desire spread through all classes—it animated all tribes—it taught that true rewards are not in gold and gems, but in men's opinions. The ambition of the Altis established fame as a common principle of action. What chivalry did for the few, the Olympic contests effected for the many,—they made a knighthood of a people.

If, warmed for a moment from the gravity of the historic muse, we might conjure up the picture of this festival, we would invoke the imagination of the reader to that sacred ground, decorated with the profusest triumphs of Grecian art—all Greece assembled from her continent, her colonies, her isles,—war suspended,—a sabbath of solemnity and rejoicing,—the Spartan no longer grave, the Athenian forgetful of the

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forum,—the highborn Thessalian, the gay Corinthian—the lively gestures of the Asiatic Ionian;—suffering the various events of various times to confound themselves in one recollection of the past, he may see every eye turned from the combatants to one majestic figure—hear every lip murmuring a single name*—glorious in greater fields: Olympia itself is forgotten. Who is the spectacle of the day? Themistocles, the conqueror of Salamis, and the saviour of Greece! Again—the huzzas of countless thousands following the chariot wheels of the competitors—whose name is shouted forth, the victor without a rival?—it is Alcibiades, the destroyer of Athens! Turn to the temple of the Olympian god, pass the brazen gates, proceed through the columned aisles,† what arrests the awe and wonder of the crowd? Seated on a throne of ebon and of ivory, of gold and gems—the olive crown on his head, in his right hand the statue of Victory, in his left, wrought of all metals, the cloud-compelling sceptre, behold the colossal master-piece of Phidias, the Homeric dream embodied,‡—the majesty

* Plut. in. vit. Them. † Pausanias, lib. v.

‡ When Phidias was asked on what idea he should form his statue, he answered by quoting the well-known verses of Homer, on the curls and nod of the thunder god.

of the Olympian Jove! Enter the banquet-room of the conquerors—to whose verse, hymned in a solemn and mighty chorus, bends the listening Spartan—it is the verse of the Dorian Pindar! In that motley and glittering space (the fair of Olympia, the mart of every commerce, the focus of all intellect,) join the throng, earnest and breathless, gathered round that sunburnt traveller;—now drinking in the wild account of Babylonian gardens, or of temples whose awful deity no lip may name,—now, with clenched hands and glowing cheeks, tracking the march of Xerxes along exhausted rivers, and over bridges that spanned the sea,—what moves, what hushes that mighty audience? It is Herodotus reading his history!*

Let us resume our survey.

XX. Midland, in the Peloponnesus, lies the pastoral Arcady. Besides the rivers of Alpheus and Erymanthus, it is watered by the gloomy stream of Styx; and its western part, intersected by innumerable brooks, is the land of Pan. Its inhabitants were long devoted to the pursuits of the herdsman and the shepherd, and its

* I am of course aware that the popular story, that Herodotus read portions of his history at Olympia, has been disputed—but I own I think it has been disputed with very indifferent success against the testimony of competent authorities, corroborated by the general practice of the time.

ancient government was apparently monarchical. The Dorian irruption spared this land of poetical tradition, which the oracle of Delphi took under no unsuitable protection, and it remained the eldest and most unviolated sanctuary of the old Pelasgic name. But not very long after the return of the Heraclidæ, we find the last king stoned by his subjects, and democratic institutions established. It was then parcelled out into small states, of which Tegea and Mantinea were the chief.

XXI. Messenia, a fertile and level district, which lies to the west of Sparta, underwent many struggles with the latter power; and this part of its history, which is full of interest, the reader will find briefly narrated in that of the Spartans, by whom it was finally subdued. Being then incorporated with that country, we cannot, at the period of history we are about to enter, consider Messenia as a separate and independent state.*

And now, completing the survey of the Peloponnesus, we rest at Laconia, the country of the Spartans.

* We find, indeed, that the Messenians continued to struggle against their conquerors, and that about the time of the battle of Marathon they broke out into a resistance sometimes called the third war.—Plato, Leg. 111.

CHAPTER VI.

RETURN OF THE HERACLIDÆ—THE SPARTAN CONSTITUTION AND HABITS—THE FIRST AND SECOND MESSENIAN WAR.

I. We have already seen that while the Dorians remained in Thessaly, the Achæans possessed the greater part of the Peloponnesus. But, under the title of the Return of the Heraclidæ (or the descendants of Hercules) an important and lasting revolution established the Dorians in the kingdoms of Agamemnon and Menelaus. The true nature of this revolution has only been rendered more obscure by modern ingenuity, which has abandoned the popular accounts for suppositions still more improbable and romantic. The popular accounts run thus:—Persecuted by Eurystheus, king of Argos, the sons of Hercules, with their friends and followers, are compelled to take refuge in Attica. Assisted by the Athe-

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nians, they defeat and slay Eurystheus, and regain the Peloponnesus. A pestilence, regarded as an ominous messenger from offended heaven, drives them again into Attica. An oracle declares that they shall succeed after the third fruit by the narrow passage at sea. Wrongly interpreting the oracle, in the third year they make for the Corinthian Isthmus. At the entrance of the Peloponnesus they are met by the assembled arms of the Achæans, Ionians, and Arcadians. Hyllus, the eldest son of Hercules, proposes the issue of a single combat. Echemus, king of Tegea, is selected by the Peloponnesians. He meets and slays Hyllus, and the Heraclidæ engage not to renew the invasion for one hundred years. Nevertheless, Cleodæus, the son, and Aristomachus, the grandson, of Hyllus, successively attempt to renew the enterprise, and in vain. The three sons of Aristomachus, (Aristodemus, Temenus, and Cresphontes,) receive from Apollo himself the rightful interpretation of the oracle. It was by the straits of Rhium, across a channel which rendered the distance between the opposing shores only five stadia, that they were ordained to pass; and by the third fruit, the third generation was denoted. The time had now arrived:—with the assistance of the Dorians, the Ætolians, and the Locrians,

Return of the Heraclidæ, B.C. 1048.

the descendants of Hercules crossed the strait, and established their settlement in Peloponnesus.

II. Whether in the previous expeditions the Dorians had assisted the Heraclidæ is a matter of dispute—it is not a matter of importance. Whether these Heraclidæ were really descendants of the Achæan prince, and the rightful heritors of a Peloponnesian throne, is a point equally contested, and equally frivolous. It is probable enough that the bold and warlike tribe of Thessaly might have been easily allured, by the pretext of reinstating the true royal line, into an enterprise which might plant them in safer and more wide domains, and that while the prince got the throne, the confederates obtained the country.* All of consequence to establish is, that the Dorians shared in the expedition, which was successful—that by time and valour they obtained nearly the whole

* Suppose Vortigern to have been expelled by the Britons, and to have implored the assistance of the Saxons to reinstate him in his throne, the Return of Vortigern would have been a highly popular name for the invasion of the Saxons. So, if the Russians, after Waterloo, had parcelled out France, and fixed a Cossack settlement in her "violet vales," the destruction of the French would have been still urbanely entitled "The Return of the Bourbons."

of the Peloponnesus—that they transplanted the Doric character and institutions to their new possessions, and that the Return of the Heraclidæ is, in fact, the popular name for the conquest of the Dorians. Whatever distinction existed between the Achæan Heraclidæ, and the Doric race, had probably been much effaced during the long absence of the former amongst foreign tribes, and after their establishment in the Peloponnesus it soon became entirely lost. But still the legend that assigned the blood of Hercules to the royalty of Sparta received early and implicit credence, and Cleomenes, king of that state, some centuries afterwards, declared himself not Doric, but Achæan.

Of the time employed in consummating the conquest of the invaders we are unable to determine—but by degrees, Sparta, Argos, Corinth, and Messene, became possessed by the Dorians; the Ætolian confederates obtained Elis. Some of the Achæans expelled the Ionians from the territory they held in the Peloponnesus, and gave to it the name it afterwards retained, of Achaia. The expelled Ionians took refuge with the Athenians, their kindred race.

The fated house of Pelops swept away by this irruption, Sparta fell to the lot of Procles and

Eurysthenes,* sons of Aristodemus, fifth in descent from Hercules; between these princes the royal power was divided, so that the constitution always acknowledged two kings—one from each of the Heracleid families. The elder house was called the Agids, or descendants of Agis, son of Eurysthenes; the latter, the Eurypontids, from Eurypon, descendant of Procles. Although Sparta, under the new dynasty, appears to have soon arrogated the pre-eminence over the other states of the Peloponnesus, it was long before she achieved the conquest even of the cities in her immediate neighbourhood. The Achæans retained the possession of Amyclæ, built upon a steep rock, and less than three miles from Sparta, for more than two centuries and a half after the first invasion of the Dorians. And here the Achæans guarded the venerable tombs of Cassandra and Agamemnon.

III. The consequences of the Dorian invasion, if slowly developed, were great and lasting. That revolution not only changed the character of the Peloponnesus—it not only called into existence the iron race of Sparta—but the migrations which it caused made the origin of the

* According to Herodotus the Spartan tradition assigned the throne to Aristodemus himself, and the regal power was not divided till after his death.

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Grecian colonies in Asia Minor. It developed also those seeds of latent republicanism which belonged to the Dorian aristocracies, and which finally supplanted the monarchical government through nearly the whole of civilized Greece. The revolution once peaceably consummated, migrations no longer disturbed to any extent the continent of Greece, and the various tribes became settled in their historic zones.

IV. The history of Sparta in the time of Lycurgus, is that of a state maintaining itself with difficulty amidst surrounding and hostile neighbours ; the power of the chiefs diminished the authority of the kings ; and while all without was danger, all within was turbulence. Still the very evils to which the Spartans were subjected—their paucity of numbers—their dissensions with their neighbours—their pent-up and encompassed situation in their mountainous confines—even the preponderating power of the warlike chiefs, among whom the unequal divisions of property produced constant feuds—served to keep alive the elements of the great Doric character ; and left it the task of the first legislative genius rather to restore and to harmonize, than to invent and create.

As I am writing the history, not of Greece, but of Athens, I do not consider it necessary

that I should detail the legendary life of Lycurgus. Modern writers have doubted his existence, but without sufficient reason:—such assaults on our belief are but the amusements of scepticism. All the popular accounts of Lycurgus agree in this —that he was the uncle of the king, (Charilaus, an infant,) and held the rank of protector—that unable successfully to confront a powerful faction raised against him, he left Sparta, and travelled into Crete, where all the ancient Doric laws and manners were yet preserved, vigorous and unadulterated. There studying the institutions of Minos, he beheld the model for those of Sparta. Thence he is said to have passed into Asia Minor, and to have been the first who collected and transported to Greece the poems of Homer,* hitherto only partially known in that country. According to some writers, he travelled also into Egypt; and could we credit one authority, which does not satisfy even the credulous Plutarch, he penetrated into Spain and Libya, and held converse with the Gymnosophists of India.

Returned to Sparta, after many solicitations, he found the state in disorder; no definite con-

* He *wrote* or *transcribed* them, is the expression of Plutarch, which I do not literally translate, because this touches upon very disputed ground.

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stitution appears to have existed; no laws were written. The division of the regal authority between two kings must have produced jealousy—and jealousy, faction. And the power so divided, weakened the monarchic energy without adding to the liberties of the people. A turbulent nobility—rude, [illegible]ghty mountain chiefs—made the only part of the community that could benefit by the weakness of the crown, and feuds amongst themselves prevented their power from becoming the regular and organized authority of a government.* Such disorders induced prince and people to desire a reform; the interference of Lycurgus was solicited; his rank and his travels gave him importance; and he had the wisdom to increase it by obtaining

* "Sometimes the states," says Plutarch, "veered to democracy—sometimes to arbitrary power;" that is, at one time the nobles invoked the people against the king, but if the people presumed too far, they supported the king against the people. If we imagine a confederacy of Highland chiefs, even a century or two ago—give them a nominal king—consider their pride and their jealousy—see them impatient of authority in one above them, yet despotic to those below—quarrelling with each other—united only by clanship, never by citizenship;—and place them in a half-conquered country, surrounded by hostile neighbours and mutinous slaves—we may then form, perhaps, some idea of the state of Sparta, previous to the legislation of Lycurgus.

from Delphi (the object of the implicit reverence of the Dorians) an oracle in his favour.

Thus called upon, and thus encouraged, Lycurgus commenced his task. I enter not into the discussion whether he framed an entirely new constitution, or whether he restored the spirit of one common to his race and not unfamiliar to Sparta. Common sense seems to me sufficient to assure us of the latter. Let those who please believe that one man, without the intervention of arms—not as a conqueror but a friend—could succeed in establishing a constitution, resting not upon laws, but manners—not upon force, but usage—utterly hostile to all the tastes, desires, and affections of human nature : moulding every, the minutest, detail of social life into one system—that system offering no temptation to sense, to ambition, to the desire of pleasure, or the love of gain, or the propensity to ease—but painful, hard, sterile, and unjoyous ;—let those who please believe that a system so created could at once be received, be popularly embraced, and last uninterrupted, unbroken, and without exciting even the desire of change, for four hundred years, without having had any previous foundation in the habits of a people—without being previously rooted by time, custom, superstition, and character, into their breasts. For

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my part, I know that all history furnishes no other such example; and I believe that no man was ever so miraculously endowed with the power to conquer nature.*

But we have not the smallest reason, the slightest excuse, for so pliant a credulity. We look to Crete, in which, previous to Lycurgus, the Dorians had established their laws and customs, and we see at once the resemblance to the leading features of the institutions of Lycurgus; we come with Aristotle to the natural conclusion, that what was familiar to the Dorian Crete was not unknown to the Dorian Sparta, and that Lycurgus did not innovate, but restore and develope, the laws and the manners which, under domestic dissensions, might have undergone a temporary and superficial change, but which were deeply implanted in the national character

* When we are told that the object of Lycurgus was to root out the luxury and effeminacy existent in Sparta, a moment's reflection tells us that effeminacy and luxury could not have existed. A tribe of fierce warriors in a city unfortified—shut in by rocks—harassed by constant war—gaining city after city from foes more civilized, stubborn to bear, and slow to yield—maintaining a perilous yoke over the far more numerous races they had subdued—what leisure, what occasion, had such men to become effeminate and luxurious?

and the Doric habits. That the regulations of Lycurgus were not regarded as peculiar to Sparta, but as the most perfect developement of the Dorian constitution, we learn from Pindar,* when he tells us that "the descendants of Pamphylus and of the Heraclidæ wish always to retain the Doric institutions of Ægimius." Thus regarded, the legislation of Lycurgus loses its miraculous and improbable character, while we still acknowledge Lycurgus himself as a great and profound statesman, adopting the only theory by which reform can be permanently wrought, and suiting the spirit of his laws to the spirit of the people they were to govern. When we know that his laws were not written, that he preferred engraving them only on the hearts of his countrymen, we know at once that he must have legislated in strict conformity to their early prepossessions and favourite notions. That the laws were unwritten would alone be a proof how little he introduced of what was alien and unknown.

V. I proceed to give a brief, but I trust a sufficient outline, of the Spartan constitution, social and political, without entering into prolix and frivolous discussions, as to what was effected or restored by Lycurgus—what by a later policy.

* See Müllers Dorians, vol. ii. p. 12, (Translation.)

There was at Sparta a public assembly of the people, (called ἀλία,) as common to other Doric states, which usually met every full moon —upon great occasions more often. The decision of peace and war—the final ratification of all treaties with foreign powers—the appointment to the office of councillor, and other important dignities—the imposition of new laws—a disputed succession to the throne,—were among those matters which required the assent of the people. Thus, there was the show and semblance of a democracy, but we shall find that the intention and origin of the constitution were far from democratic. "If the people should opine perversely, the elders and the princes shall dissent." Such was an addition to the Rhetra of Lycurgus. The Popular Assembly ratified laws, but it could propose none—it could not even alter or amend the decrees that were laid before it. It appears that only the princes, the magistrates, and foreign ambassadors, had the privilege to address it.

The main business of the state was prepared by the Gerusia, or council of elders, a senate consisting of thirty members, inclusive of the two kings, who had each but a simple vote in the assembly. This council was in its outline like the assemblies common to every Dorian

state. Each senator was required to have reached the age of sixty; he was chosen by the popular assembly, not by vote, but by acclamation. The mode of election was curious. The candidates presented themselves successively before the assembly, while certain judges were enclosed in an adjacent room where they could hear the clamour of the people without seeing the person of the candidate. On him whom they adjudged to have been most applauded the election fell. A mode of election open to every species of fraud, and justly condemned by Aristotle as frivolous and puerile.* Once elected, the senator retained his dignity for life: he was even removed from all responsibility to the people. That Müller should consider this an admirable institution, "a splendid monument of early Grecian customs," seems to me not a little extraordinary. I can conceive no elective council less practically good than one to which election is for life, and in which power is irresponsible. That the institution was felt to be faulty is apparent, not because it was abolished, but because its more important functions

* In the same passage Aristotle, with that wonderful sympathy in opinion between himself and the political philosophers of our own day, condemns the principle of seeking and canvassing for suffrages.

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became gradually invaded and superseded by a third legislative power, of which I shall speak presently.

The original duties of the Gerusia were to prepare the decrees and business to be submitted to the people; they had the power of inflicting death or degradation: without written laws, they interpreted custom, and were intended to preserve and transmit it. The power of the kings may be divided into two heads—power at home—power abroad: power as a prince—power as a general. In the first it was limited and inconsiderable. Although the kings presided over a separate tribunal, the cases brought before their court related only to repairs of roads, to the superintendence of the intercourse with other states, and to questions of inheritance and adoption.

When present at the council they officiated as presidents, but without any power of dictation; and, if absent, their place seems easily to have been supplied. They united the priestly with the regal character; and to the descendants of a demigod a certain sanctity was attached, visible in the ceremonies both at demise and at the accession to the throne, which appeared to Herodotus to savour rather of Oriental than Hellenic origin. But the respect which the Spartan monarch received

neither endowed him with luxury nor exempted him from control. He was undistinguished by his garb—his mode of life, from the rest of the citizens. He was subjected to other authorities, could be reprimanded, fined, suspended, exiled, put to death. If he went as ambassador to foreign states, spies were not unfrequently sent with him, and colleagues the most avowedly hostile to his person associated in the mission. Thus curbed and thus confined was his authority at home, and his prerogative as a king. But by law he was the leader of the Spartan armies. He assumed the command—he crossed the boundaries, and the limited magistrate became at once an imperial despot!* No man could question—no law circumscribed, his power. He raised armies, collected money in foreign states, and condemned to death without even the formality of a trial. Nothing, in short, curbed his authority, save his responsibility on return. He might be a tyrant as a general; but he was to account for the tyranny when he relapsed into a king. But this distinction was one of the

* In this was preserved the form of royalty in the Heroic times. Aristotle well remarks, that in the council Agamemnon bears reproach and insult, but in the field he becomes armed with authority over life itself—"Death is in his hand."

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wisest parts of the Spartan system; for war requires in a leader all the license of a despot; and triumph, decision, and energy can only be secured by the unfettered exercise of a single will. Nor did early Rome owe the extent of her conquests to any cause more effective than the unlicensed discretion reposed by the senate in the general.*

VI. We have now to examine the most active and efficient part of the government, viz. the Institution of the Ephors. Like the other components of the Spartan constitution, the name and the office of ephor were familiar to other states in the great Dorian family; but in Sparta the institution soon assumed peculiar features, or rather while the inherent principles of the monarchy and the gerusia remained stationary, those of the ephors became expanded and developed. It is clear that the later authority of the ephors was never designed by Lycurgus, or the earlier legislators. It is entirely at variance with the confined aristocracy which was

* Whereas the modern republics of Italy rank among the causes which prevented their assuming a widely conquering character, their extreme jealousy of their commanders, often wisely ridiculed by the great Italian historians; so that a baggage cart could scarcely move, or a cannon be planted, without an order from the senate!

the aim of the Spartan, and of nearly every genuine Doric* constitution. It made a democracy as it were by stealth. This powerful body consisted of five persons, chosen annually by the people. In fact, they may be called the representatives of the popular will—the committee, as it were, of the popular council. Their original power seems to have been imperfectly designed; it soon became extensive and encroaching. At first the Ephoralty was a tribunal for civil, as the gerusia was for criminal, causes; it exercised a jurisdiction over the Helots and Periœci, over the public market, and the public revenue. But its character consisted in this:—it was strictly a popular body, chosen by the people for the maintenance of their interests. Agreeably to this character, it soon appears arrogating the privilege of instituting inquiry into the conduct of all officials, except the councillors. Every eighth year selecting a dark night, when the moon withheld her light, the ephors watched the aspect of the heavens, and

* Müller rightly observes that, though the ephoralty was a common Dorian magistrature, "yet, considered as an office, opposed to the king and council, it is not for that reason less peculiar to the Spartans; and in no Doric, nor even in any Grecian state, is there any thing which exactly corresponds with it."

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if any shooting star were visible in the expanse, the kings were adjudged to have offended the Deity, and were suspended from their office until acquitted of their guilt by the oracle of Delphi, or the priests at Olympia. Nor was this prerogative of adjudging the descendants of Hercules confined to a superstitious practice : they summoned the king before them, no less than the meanest of the magistrates, to account for imputed crimes. In a court, composed of the councillors, (or gerusia,) and various other magistrates, they appeared at once as accusers and judges ; and, dispensing with appeal to a popular assembly, subjected even royalty to a trial of life and death. Before the Persian war they sat in judgment on the king Cleomenes, for an accusation of bribery ;—just after the Persian war, they resolved upon the execution of the Regent Pausanias. In lesser offences they acted without the formality of this council, and fined or reprimanded their kings for the affability of their manners, or the size* of their wives. Over education—over social habits—over the regulations relative to ambassadors and

* They rebuked Archidamus for having married too small a wife. See Müller's Dorians, vol. ii. (Translation,) p. 124, and the authorities he quotes.

strangers—over even the marshalling of armies, and the number of troops, they extended their inquisitorial jurisdiction. They became, in fact, the actual government of the state.

It is easy to perceive that it was in the nature of things that the institution of the ephors should thus encroach until it became the prevalent power. Its influence was the result of the vicious constitution of the gerusia, or council. Had that assembly been properly constituted, there would have been no occasion for the ephors. The gerusia was evidently meant by the policy of Lycurgus, and by its popular mode of election, for the only representative assembly. But the absurdity of election for life, with irresponsible powers, was sufficient to limit its acceptation amongst the people. Of two assemblies—the ephors and the gerusia—we see the one elected annually, the other for life—the one responsible to the people, the other not—the one composed of men, busy, stirring, ambitious, in the vigour of life—the other of veterans, past the ordinary stimulus of exertion, and regarding the dignity of office rather as the reward of a life, than the opening to ambition. Of two such assemblies it is easy to foretell which would lose, and which would augment, authority. It is also easy to see that as the ephors

increased in importance, they, and not the gerusia, would become the check to the kingly authority. To whom was the king accountable? To the people:—the ephors were the people's representatives! This part of the Spartan constitution has not, I think, been sufficiently considered in what seems to me its true light; namely, that of a representative government. The ephoralty was the focus of the popular power. Like an American Congress, or an English House of Commons, it prevented the action of the people, by acting in behalf of the people. To representatives annually chosen the multitude cheerfully left the management of their interests.* Thus it was true that the ephors prevented the encroachments of the popular assembly;—but how? by encroaching themselves, and in the name of the people! When we are told that Sparta was free from those democratic innovations constant in Ionian states, we are not told truly. The Spartan populace was constantly innovating, not openly, as in the noisy Agora of Athens, but silently and ceaselessly, through their delegated ephors. And these dread and tyrant FIVE—an oligarchy constructed upon principles the most liberal—went on in-

* Aristotle, as quoted page 209.

creasing their authority as civilisation, itself increasing, rendered the public business more extensive and multifarious, until they at length became the agents of that Fate which makes the principle of change at once the vital and the consuming element of states. The ephors gradually destroyed the constitution of Sparta; but, without the ephors, it may be reasonably doubted whether the constitution would have survived half as long. Aristotle (whose mighty intellect is never more luminously displayed than when adjudging the practical workings of various forms of government) paints the evils of the ephoral magistrature, but acknowledges that it gave strength and durability to the state. "For,"* he says, "the people were contented on account of their ephors, who were chosen from the whole body." He might have added, that men so chosen, rarely too selected from the chiefs, but often from the lower ranks, were the ablest and most active of the community, and that the fewness of their numbers gave energy and unity to their councils. Had the other part of the Spartan constitution (absurdly panegyrized) been so formed as to harmonize with, even in checking, the power of the ephors; and, above all, had it not been for the

* Aristot. Pol. lib. ii. c. 9.

lamentable errors of a social system, which, by seeking to exclude the desire of gain, created a terrible re-action, and made the Spartan magistrature the most venal and corrupt in Greece—the ephors might have sufficed to develope all the best principles of government. For they went nearly to recognise the soundest philosophy of the representative system, being the smallest number of representatives chosen, without restriction, from the greatest number of electors, for short periods, and under strong responsibilities.*

I pass now to the social system of the Spartans.

VII. If we consider the situation of the Spartans at the time of Lycurgus, and during a long subsequent period, we see at once that to enable them to live at all, they must be accustomed to the life of a camp;—they were a little colony of soldiers, supporting themselves, hand and foot, in a hostile country, over a population that detested them. In such a situation certain qualities were not praiseworthy alone—they were necessary. To be always prepared for a

* These remarks on the democratic and representative nature of the ephoralty are only to be applied to it in connexion with the *Spartan* people. It must be remembered that the ephors represented the will of that dominant class, and not of the Laconians or Periœci, who made the bulk of the non-enslaved population; and the democracy of their constitution was therefore but the democracy of an oligarchy.

foe—to be constitutionally averse to indolence—to be brave, temperate, and hardy, were the only means by which to escape the sword of the Messenian, and to master the hatred of the Helot. Sentinels they were, and they required the virtues of sentinels: fortunately these necessary qualities were inherent in the bold mountain tribes that had long roved amongst the crags of Thessaly, and wrestled for life with the martial Lapithæ. But it now remained to mould these qualities into a system, and to educate each individual in the habits which could best preserve the community. Accordingly the child was reared, from the earliest age, to a life of hardship, discipline, and privation; he was starved into abstinence;—he was beaten into fortitude;—he was punished without offence, that he might be trained to bear without a groan;—the older he grew, till he reached manhood, the severer the discipline he underwent. The intellectual education was little attended to; for what had sentinels to do with the sciences or the arts? But the youth was taught acuteness, promptness, and discernment—for such are qualities essential to the soldier. He was stimulated to condense his thoughts, and to be ready in reply; to say little, and to the point. An aphorism

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bounded his philosophy. Such an education produced its results in an athletic frame, in simple and hardy habits—in indomitable patience—in quick sagacity. But there were other qualities necessary to the position of the Spartan, and those scarce so praiseworthy—viz. craft and simulation. He was one of a scanty, if a valiant, race. No single citizen could be spared the state: it was often better to dupe than to fight an enemy. Accordingly, the boy was trained to cunning as to courage. He was driven by hunger, or the orders of the leader over him, to obtain his food, in house or in field, by stealth;—if undiscovered, he was applauded; if detected, punished. Two main springs of action were constructed within him—the dread of shame, and the love of country. These were motives, it is true, common to all the Grecian states, but they seem to have been especially powerful in Sparta. But the last produced its abuse in one of the worst vices of the national character. The absorbing love for his native Sparta rendered the citizen singularly selfish towards other states, even kindred to that which he belonged to. Fearless as a Spartan,—when Sparta was unmenaced he was lukewarm as a Greek. And this exaggerated yet sectarian patriotism, almost peculiar to Sparta,

was centred, not only in the safety and greatness of the state, but in the inalienable preservation of its institutions;—a feeling carefully sustained by a policy exceedingly jealous of strangers.* Spartans were not permitted to travel. Foreigners were but rarely permitted a residence within the city: and the Spartan dislike to Athens arose rather from fear of the contamination of her principles than from envy at the lustre of her fame. When we find (as our history proceeds) the Spartans dismissing their Athenian ally from the siege of Ithomé, we recognize their jealousy of the innovating character of their brilliant neighbour;—they

* Machiavel, (Discourses on the first Decade of Livy, b. i. c. vi.) attributes the duration of the Spartan government to two main causes—first, the fewness of the body to be governed, allowing fewness in the governors; and secondly, the prevention of all the changes and corruption which the admission of strangers would have occasioned. He proceeds then to show, that for the long duration of a constitution the people should be few in number, and all popular impulse and innovation checked; yet that, for the splendour and greatness of a state, not only population should be encouraged, but even political ferment and agitation be leniently regarded. Sparta is his model for duration, republican Rome for progress and empire. "To my judgment," the Florentine concludes, "I prefer the latter, and for the strife and emulation between the nobles and the people, they are to be regarded indeed as inconveniences, but necessary to a state that would rise to the Roman grandeur."

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feared the infection of the Democracy of the Agora. This attachment to one exclusive system of government characterised all the foreign policy of Sparta, and crippled the national sense by the narrowest bigotry and the obtusest prejudice. Wherever she conquered, she enforced her own constitution, no matter how inimical to the habits of the people, never dreaming that what was good for Sparta might be bad for any other state. Thus, when she imposed the Thirty Tyrants on Athens, she sought, in fact, to establish her own gerusia; and, no doubt, she imagined it would become, not a curse, but a blessing, to a people accustomed to the wildest freedom of a popular assembly. Though herself, through the tyranny of the ephors, the unconscious puppet of the democratic action, she recoiled from all other and more open forms of democracy as from a pestilence. The simple habits of the Spartan life assisted to confirm the Spartan prejudices. A costly dinner, a fine house, these sturdy Dorians regarded as a pitiable sign of folly. They had no respect for any other cultivation of the mind, than that which produced bold men, and short sentences. Them, nor the science of Aristotle, nor the dreams of Plato were fitted to delight. Music and dancing were indeed cultivated amongst them, and with success and

skill; but the music and the dance were always of one kind—it was a crime to vary an air* or invent a measure. A martial, haughty, and superstitious tribe, can scarcely fail to be attached to poetry,—war is ever the inspiration of song,—and the eve of battle to a Spartan was the season of sacrifice to the Muses. The poetical temperament seems to have been common amongst this singular people. But the dread of innovation, when carried to excess, has even worse effect upon literary genius than legislative science, and though Sparta produced a few poets gifted, doubtless, with the skill to charm the audience they addressed, not a single one of the number has bequeathed to us any other memorial than his name. Greece, which preserved, as in a common treasury, whatever was approved by her unerring taste, her wonderful appreciation of the Beautiful, regarded the Spartan poetry with an indifference which convinces us of its want of value. Thebes, and not Sparta, has transmitted to us the Dorian spirit in its noblest shape; and in Pindar we find how lofty the verse that was inspired by its pride, its daring, and its sublime reverence for glory and the gods. As for commerce, manufactures, agriculture, the manual arts—such peaceful occupations were beneath the dignity of a Spartan

* Plut. de Musicâ.

—they were strictly prohibited by law as by pride, and were left to the Periœci or the Helots.

VIII. It was evidently necessary to this little colony to be united. Nothing unites men more than living together in common. The syssitia, or public tables, an institution which was common in Crete, in Corinth,* and in Megara, effected this object in a mode agreeable to the Dorian manners. The society at each table was composed of men belonging to the same tribe or clan. New members could only be elected by consent of the rest. Each head of a family in Sparta paid for his own admission, and that of the other members of his house. Men only belonged to them. The youths and boys had their own separate table. The young children, however, sate with their parents on low stools, and received a half share. Women were excluded. Despite the celebrated black broth, the table seems to have been sufficiently, if not elegantly, furnished. And the second course, consisting of voluntary gifts, which was supplied by the poorer members from the produce of the chace—by the wealthier from their flocks, orchards, poultry, &c., furnished what by Spartans were considered dainties. Conversation was fa-

* At Corinth they were abolished by Periander as favourable to an aristocracy, according to Aristotle; but a better reason might be, that they were dangerous to tyranny.

miliar, and even jocose, and relieved by songs. Thus the public tables (which even the kings were ordinarily obliged to attend) were rendered agreeable and inviting, by the attractions of intimate friendship and unrestrained intercourse.

IX. The obscurest question relative to the Spartan system is that connected with property. It was evidently the intention of Lycurgus or the earlier legislators, to render all the divisions of land and wealth as equal as possible. But no law can effect what society forbids. The equality of one generation cannot be transmitted to another. It may be easy to prevent a great accumulation of wealth, but what can prevent poverty? While the acquisition of lands by purchase was forbidden, no check was imposed on its acquisition by gift or testament; and in the time of Aristotle land had become the monopoly of the few. Sparta, like other states, had consequently her inequalities—her comparative rich and her positive poor—from an early period in her known history. As land descended to women, so marriages alone established great disparities of property. "Were the whole territory," says Aristotle, "divided into five portions, two would belong to the women." The regulation by which the man who could not pay his quota to the syssitia was excluded from the public tables, proves that it was not an uncommon occurrence to be so ex-

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cluded ; and indeed that exclusion grew at last so common that the public tables became an aristocratic instead of a democratic institution. Aristotle, in later times, makes it an objection to the ephoral government that poor men were chosen ephors, and that their venality arose from their indigence—a moral proof that poverty in Sparta must have been more common than has generally been supposed ;*—men of property would not have chosen their judges and dictators in paupers. I and was held and cultivated by the Helots, who paid a certain fixed proportion of the produce to their masters. It is said that Lycurgus forbade the use of gold and silver, and ordained an iron coinage ; but gold and silver were at that time unknown as coins in Sparta, and iron was a common medium of exchange throughout Greece. The interdiction of the precious metals was therefore of later origin. It seems to have only related to private Spartans. For those who, not being Spartans of the city—

* " Yet although goods were appropriated, their uses," says Aristotle, " were freely communicated,—a Spartan could use the horses, the slaves, the dogs, and carriages of another." If this were to be taken literally, it is difficult to see how a Spartan could be poor. We must either imagine that different times are confounded, or that limitations with which we are unacquainted were made in this system of borrowing.

that is to say, for the Laconians or Periœci—engaged in commerce, the interdiction could not have existed. A more pernicious regulation it is impossible to conceive. While it effectually served to cramp the effects of emulation—to stint the arts—to limit industry and enterprise—it produced the direct object it was intended to prevent;—it infected the whole state with the desire of gold—it forbade wealth to be spent, in order that wealth might be hoarded; every man seems to have desired gold precisely because he could make very little use of it! From the king to the Helot,* the spirit of covetousness spread like a disease. No state in Greece was so open to bribery—no magistracy so corrupt as the ephors. Sparta became a nation of misers precisely because it could not become a nation of spendthrifts. Such are the results which man produces when his legislation deposes nature!

X. In their domestic life, the Spartans, like the rest of the Greeks, had but little pleasure in the society of their wives. At first the young husband only visited his bride by stealth—to be seen in company with her was a disgrace. But the women enjoyed a much greater freedom and re-

* See throughout the Grecian history, the Helots collecting the plunder of the battle-field, hiding it from the gripe of their lords, and selling gold at the price of brass!

ceived a higher respect in Sparta than elsewhere; the soft Asiatic distinctions in dignity between the respective sexes did not reach the hardy mountaineers of Lacedæmon; the wife was the mother of men! Brought up in robust habits, accustomed to athletic exercises, her person exposed in public processions and dances, which, but for the custom that made decorous even indecency itself, would have been indeed licentious, the Spartan maiden, strong, hardy, and half a partaker in the ceremonies of public life, shared the habits, aided the emulation, imbibed the patriotism, of her future consort. And, by her sympathy with his habits and pursuits, she obtained an influence and ascendancy over him which was unknown in the rest of Greece. Dignified on public occasions, the Spartan matron was deemed, however, a virago in private life; and she who had no sorrow for a slaughtered son, had very little deference for a living husband. Her obedience to her spouse appears to have been the most cheerfully rendered upon those delicate emergencies when the service of the state required her submission to the embraces of another!*

* Aristotle, who is exceedingly severe on the Spartan ladies, says very shrewdly, that the men were trained to submission to a civil by a military system, while the women were left untamed. A Spartan hero was thus made to be

XI. We now come to the most melancholy and gloomy part of the Spartan system—the condition of the Helots.

The whole fabric of the Spartan character rested upon slavery. If it were beneath a Spartan to labour—to maintain himself—to cultivate land—to build a house—to exercise an art;—to do aught else than to fight an enemy—to choose an ephor—to pass from the chace or the palæstra to the public tables—to live a hero in war—an aristocrat in peace,—it was clearly a supreme necessity to his very existence as a citizen, and even as a human being, that there should be a subordinate class of persons employed in the

henpecked. Yet, with all the alleged severity of the Dorian morals, these sturdy matrons rather discarded the graces than avoided the frailties of their softer cotemporaries. Plato[1] and Aristotle[2] give very unfavourable testimonials of their chastity. Plutarch, the blind panegyrist of Sparta, observes with amusing composure, that the Spartan husbands were permitted to lend their wives to each other; and Polybius (in a fragment of the 12th book[3]) informs us that it was an old-fashioned and common custom in Sparta for three or four brothers to share one wife. The poor husbands!—no doubt the lady was a match for them all! So much for those gentle creatures whom that grave German Professor, M. Müller, holds up to our admiration and despair.

[1] Plat. de legibus, lib. i. and lib. vi. [2] Aristot. Repub. lib. ii.

[3] Fragm. Vatican. tom ii. p. 384.

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occupations rejected by himself, and engaged in providing for the wants of this privileged citizen. Without Helots the Spartan was the most helpless of human beings. Slavery taken from the Spartan state, the state would fall at once! It is no wonder, therefore, that this institution should have been guarded with an extraordinary jealousy—nor that extraordinary jealousy should have produced extraordinary harshness. It is exactly in proportion to the fear of losing power that men are generally tyrannical in the exercise of it. Nor is it from cruelty of disposition, but from the anxious curse of living amongst men whom social circumstances make his enemies because his slaves, that a despot usually grows ferocious, and that the urgings of suspicion create the reign of terror. Besides the political necessity of a strict and unrelaxed slavery, a Spartan would also be callous to the sufferings, from his contempt for the degradation, of the slave; as he despised the employments abandoned to the Helot, even so would he despise the wretch that exercised them. Thus the motives that render power most intolerant combined in the Spartan in his relations to the Helot—viz. 1st, necessity for his services, lost perhaps if the curb were ever relaxed—2ndly, consummate contempt for the individual he de-

based. The habit of tyranny makes tyranny necessary. When the slave has been long maddened by your yoke, if you lighten it for a moment he rebels. He has become your deadliest foe, and self-preservation renders it necessary that him whom you provoke to vengeance you should crush to impotence. The longer, therefore, the Spartan government endured, the more cruel became the condition of the Helots. Not in Sparta were those fine distinctions of rank which exist where slavery is unknown, binding class with class by ties of mutual sympathy and dependence—so that Poverty itself may be a benefactor to Destitution. Even among the poor the Helot had no brotherhood! he was as necessary to the meanest, as to the highest, Spartan—his wrongs gave its very existence to the commonwealth. We cannot, then, wonder at the extreme barbarity with which the Spartans treated this miserable race; and we can even find something of excuse for a cruelty which became at last the instinct of self-preservation. Revolt and massacre were perpetually before a Spartan's eyes; and what man will be gentle and unsuspecting to those who wait only the moment to murder him?

XII. The origin of the Helot race is not clearly ascertained: the popular notion that

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they were the descendants of the inhabitants of Helos, a maritime town subdued by the Spartans, and that they were degraded to servitude after a revolt, is by no means a conclusive account. Whether, as Müller suggests, they were the original slave population of the Achæans, or whether, as the ancient authorities held, they were such of the Achæans themselves as had most obstinately resisted the Spartan sword, and had at last surrendered without conditions, is a matter it is now impossible to determine. For my own part, I incline to the former supposition, partly because of the wide distinction between the enslaved Helots and the (merely) inferior Periœci, who were certainly Achæans; a distinction which I do not think the different manner in which the two classes were originally subdued would suffice to account for;—partly because I doubt whether the handful of Dorians who first fixed their dangerous settlement in Laconia could have effectually subjugated the Helots, if the latter had not previously been enured to slavery. The objection to this hypothesis—that the Helots could scarcely have so hated the Spartans if they had merely changed masters, does not appear to me very cogent. Under the mild and paternal chiefs of the Homeric age,* they might have

* In Homer the condition of the slave seems, everywhere, tempered by the kindness and indulgence of the master.

been subjected to a much gentler servitude. Accustomed to the manners and habits of their Achæan lords, they might have half forgotten their condition; and though governed by Spartans in the same external relations, it was in a very different spirit. The sovereign contempt with which the Spartans regarded the Helots, they would scarcely have felt for a tribe distinguished from the more honoured Periœci only by a sterner valour and a greater regard for freedom; while that contempt is easily accounted for, if its objects were the previously subdued population of a country the Spartans themselves subdued.

The Helots were considered the property of the state—but they were entrusted and leased, as it were, to individuals; they were bound to the soil; even the state did not arrogate the power of selling them out of the country; they paid to their masters a rent in corn—the surplus profits were their own. It was easier for a Helot than for a Spartan to acquire riches—but riches were yet more useless to him. Some of the Helots attended their masters at the public tables, and others were employed in all public works: they served in the field as light armed troops: they were occasionally emancipated, but there were several intermediate grades be-

tween the Helot and the freeman; their nominal duties were gentle, indeed, when compared with the spirit in which they were regarded and the treatment they received. That much exaggeration respecting the barbarity of their masters existed is probable enough; but the exaggeration itself, amongst writers accustomed to the institution of slavery elsewhere, and by no means addicted to an overstrained humanity, is a proof of the manner in which the treatment of the Helots was viewed by the more gentle slave-masters of the rest of Greece. They were branded with ineffaceable dishonour: no Helot might sing a Spartan song; if he but touched what belonged to a Spartan it was profaned—he was the Pariah of Greece. The ephors—the popular magistrates—the guardians of freedom—are reported by Aristotle to have entered office in making a formal declaration of war against the Helots—probably but an idle ceremony of disdain and insult. We cannot believe with Plutarch, that the infamous cryptia was instituted for the purpose he assigns—viz. that it was an ambuscade of the Spartan youths, who dispersed themselves through the country, and by night murdered whomsoever of the Helots they could meet. But it is certain that a select portion of the younger Spartans ranged the country yearly,

armed with daggers, and that with the object of attaining familiarity with military hardships was associated that of strict, stern, and secret surveillance over the Helot population. No Helot, perhaps, was murdered from mere wantonness; but who does not see how many would necessarily have been butchered at the slightest suspicion of disaffection, or for the faintest utility of example? These miserable men were the objects of compassion to all Greece. "It was the common opinion," says Ælian, "that the earthquake in Sparta was a judgment from the gods, upon the Spartan inhumanity to the Helots." And perhaps in all history (not even excepting that awful calmness with which the Italian historians narrate the cruelties of a Paduan tyrant or a Venetian oligarchy) there is no record of crime more thrilling than that dark and terrible passage in Thucydides which relates how two thousand Helots, the best and bravest of their tribe, were selected as for reward and freedom,—how they were led to the temples in thanksgiving to the gods—and how they disappeared,—their fate notorious—the manner of it a mystery!

XIII. Besides the Helots, the Spartans exercised an authority over the intermediate class called the Periœci. These were indubitably the old Achæan race, who had been reduced, not to

slavery, but to dependence. They retained possession of their own towns, estimated in number, after the entire conquest of Messenia, at one hundred. They had their own different grades and classes, as the Saxons retained theirs after the conquest of the Normans. Among these were the traders and manufacturers of Laconia ; and thus whatever art attained of excellence in the dominions of Sparta was not Spartan but Achæan. They served in the army, sometimes as heavy-armed, sometimes as light-armed soldiery, according to their rank or callings ; and one of the Periœci obtained the command at sea. They appear, indeed, to have been universally acknowledged throughout Greece as free citizens, yet dependent subjects. But the Spartans jealously and sternly maintained the distinction between exemption from the servitude of a Helot, and participation in the rights of a Dorian : the Helot lost his personal liberty—the Periœcus his political.

XIV. The free, or purely Spartan, population, (as not improbably with every Doric state,) was divided into three generic tribes—the Hyllean, the Dymanatan, and the Pamphylian : of these the Hyllean (the reputed descendants of the son of Hercules) gave to Sparta both her kings. Besides these tribes of blood or race, there were also five

local tribes, which formed the constituency of the ephors, and thirty subdivisions called *obes*—according to which the more aristocratic offices appear to have been elected. There were also recognized in the Spartan constitution two distinct classes—the Equals, and the Inferiors. Though these were hereditary divisions, merit might promote a member of the last—demerit degrade a member of the first. The Inferiors, though not boasting the nobility of the Equals, often possessed men equally honoured and powerful: as among the commoners of England are sometimes found persons of higher birth and more important station than amongst the peers—(a term somewhat synonymous with that of Equal.) But the higher class enjoyed certain privileges which we can but obscurely trace.* Forming an assembly amongst themselves, it may be that they alone elected to the senate; and perhaps they were also distinguished by some peculiarities of education—an assertion made by Mr. Müller, but not to my mind sufficiently established. With respect to the origin of this distinction between the Inferiors and the Equals, my own belief is, that it took place at some period (possibly during the Messenian wars) when

* Three of the equals always attended the king's person in war.

the necessities of a failing population induced the Spartans to increase their number by the admixture either of strangers, but (as that hypothesis is scarce agreeable to Spartan manners) more probably of the Periœci; the new citizens would thus be the Inferiors. Among the Greek settlements in Italy, it was by no means uncommon for a colony once sufficiently established, only to admit new settlers even from the parent state upon inferior terms; and in like manner in Venice arose the distinction between the gentlemen and the citizens; for when to that sea-girt state many flocked for security and refuge, it seemed but just to give to the prior inhabitants the distinction of hosts, and to consider the immigrators as guests;—to the first a share in the administration and a superior dignity—to the last only shelter and repose.

XV. Such are the general outlines of the state and constitution of Sparta—the firmest aristocracy that perhaps ever existed, for it was an aristocracy on the widest base. If some Spartans were noble, every Spartan boasted himself gentle. His birth forbade him to work, and his only profession was the sword. The difference between the meanest Spartan and his king was not so great as that between a Spartan

and a Periœcus. Not only the servitude of the Helots, but the subjection of the Periœci, perpetually nourished the pride of the superior race; and to be born a Spartan was to be born to power. The sense of superiority and the habit of command impart a certain elevation to the manner and the bearing. There was probably more of dignity in the poorest Spartan citizen than in the wealthiest noble of Corinth—the most voluptuous courtier of Syracuse. And thus the reserve, the decorum, the stately simplicity of the Spartan mien—could not but impose upon the imagination of the other Greeks, and obtain the credit for correspondent qualities which did not always exist beneath that lofty exterior. To lively nations affected by externals, there was much in that sedate majesty of demeanour; to gallant nations, much in that heroic valour; to superstitious nations, much in that proverbial regard to religious rites;—which characterized the Spartan race. Declaimers on luxury admired their simplicity—the sufferers from innovation, their adherence to ancient manners. Many a victim of the turbulence of party in Athens sighed for the repose of the Lacedæmonian city; and as we always exaggerate the particular evils we endure, and admire most blindly the circumstances most opposite to those by

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which we are affected, so it was often the fashion of more intellectual states to extol the institutions of which they saw only from afar and through a glass, the apparent benefits, without examining the concomitant defects. An Athenian might laud the Spartan austerity, as Tacitus might laud the German barbarism—it was the panegyric of rhetoric and satire, of wounded patriotism or disappointed ambition. Although the ephors made the government really and latently democratic, yet the concentration of its action made it seemingly oligarchic; and in its secrecy, caution, vigilance, and energy, it exhibited the best of the oligarchic features. Whatever was democratic by law was counteracted in its results by all that was aristocratic in custom. It was a state of political freedom, but of social despotism. This rigidity of ancient usages was binding long after its utility was past. For what was admirable at one time became pernicious at another; what protected the infant state from dissension, stinted all luxuriance of intellect in the more matured community. It is in vain that modern writers have attempted to deny this fact—the proof is before us. By her valour Sparta was long the most eminent state of the most intellectual of all countries; and when we ask what she has be-

queathed to mankind—what she has left us in rivalry to that Athens, whose poetry yet animates, whose philosophy yet guides, whose arts yet inspire the world—we find only the names of two or three minor poets, whose works have perished, and some half a dozen pages of pithy aphorisms and pointed repartees!

XVI. My object in the above sketch has been to give a general outline of the Spartan character and the Spartan system during the earlier and more brilliant æra of Athenian history, without entering into unnecessary conjectures as to the precise period of each law and each change. The social and political state of Sparta became fixed by her conquest of Messenia. It is not within the plan of my undertaking to retail at length the legendary and for the most part fabulous accounts of the first and second Messenian wars. The first was dignified by the fate of the Messenian hero Aristodemus, and the fall of the rocky fortress of Ithomé; its result was the conquest of Messenia; the inhabitants were compelled to an oath of submission, and to surrender to Sparta half their agricultural produce. After the first Messenian war, Tarentum was founded by a Spartan colony, composed, it is said, of youths,*

Probably begun 743 B.C. ended 723.

* The institution of the ephors has been, with probability,

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the offspring of Spartan women and Laconian men, who were dissatisfied with their exclusion from citizenship, and by whom the state was menaced with a formidable conspiracy shared by the Helots. Meanwhile the Messenians, if conquered, were not subdued. Years rolled away, and time had effaced the remembrance of the past sufferings, but not of the ancient* liberties.

It was amongst the youth of Messenia, that the hope of the national deliverance was the most intensely cherished. At length, in Andania, the revolt broke forth. A young man, pre-eminent above the rest for birth, for valour, and for genius, was the head and the soul of the enterprise. His name was Aristomenes. Forming secret alliances with the Argives and Arcadians, he at length ventured to raise his standard, and encountered at Dera, on their own domains, the Spartan force. The issue of the battle was indecisive; still, however, it seems to have seriously aroused the fears of Sparta: no farther hostilities took place till the following year; the oracle at Delphi was solemnly consulted, and the god ordained the Spartans to seek their adviser in an Athenian. They sent

Probably B.C. 679.

referred to this epoch—chosen at first as the viceroys in the absence of the kings.

* Pausanias, Messenics.

to Athens and obtained Tyrtæus. A popular but fabulous account* describes him as a lame teacher of grammar, and of no previous repute. His songs and his exhortations are said to have produced almost miraculous effects. I omit the romantic adventures of the hero Aristomenes, though it may be doubted whether all Grecian history can furnish passages that surpass the poetry of his reputed life. I leave the reader to learn elsewhere how he hung at night a shield in the temple of Chalciœcus, in the very city of the foe, with the inscription, that Aristomenes dedicated to the goddess that shield from the spoils of the Spartans—how he penetrated the secret recesses of Trophonius—how he was deterred from entering Sparta by the spectres of Helen and the Dioscuri—how taken prisoner in an attempt to seize the women of Ægila, he was released by the love of the priestess of Ceres——how, again made captive, and cast into a deep pit with fifty of his men, he escaped by seizing hold of a fox, (attracted thither by the dead bodies,) and suffering himself to be drawn by her through dark and scarce pervious places to a hole that led to the upper air:—These adventures, and others equally romantic, I must

* See Müller's Dorians, vol. i. p. 172, and Clinton's Fast. Hell. vol. i. p. 183.

leave to the genius of more credulous historians.

All that seems to me worthy of belief is that after stern, but unavailing struggles, the Messenians abandoned Andania, and took their last desperate station at Ira, a mountain at whose feet flows the river Neda, separating Messenia from Triphylia. Here, fortified alike by art and nature, they sustained a siege of eleven years. But with the eleventh the term of their resistance was completed. The slave of a Spartan of rank had succeeded in engaging the affections of a Messenian woman who dwelt without the walls of the mountain fortress. One night the guilty pair were at the house of the adulteress—the husband abruptly returned—the slave was concealed, and overheard that, in consequence of a violent and sudden storm, the Messenian guard had deserted the citadel, not fearing attack from the foe on so tempestuous a night, and not anticipating the inspection of Aristomenes, who at that time was suffering from a wound. The slave overheard—escaped—reached the Spartan camp—apprised his master Emperamus (who in the absence of the kings headed the troops) of the desertion of the guard:—an assault was agreed on: despite the darkness of the night, despite the violence of the rain—the Spartans

marched on:—scaled the fortifications:—were within the walls. The fulfilment of dark prophecies had already portended the fate of the besieged; and now the very howling of the dogs in a strange and unwonted manner was deemed a prodigy. Alarmed, aroused, the Messenians betook themselves to the nearest weapons within their reach. Aristomenes, his son Gorgus, Theoclus, the guardian prophet of his tribe, (whose valour was equal to his science,) were among the first to perceive the danger. Night passed in tumult and disorder. Day dawned, but rather to terrify than encourage—the storm increased—the thunder burst—the lightning glared. What dismayed the besieged encouraged the besiegers. Still, with all the fury of despair, the Messenians fought on: the very women took part in the contest, death was preferable, even in their eyes, to slavery and dishonour. But the Spartans were far superior in number, and, by continual reliefs, the fresh succeeded to the weary. In arms for three days and three nights without respite, worn out with watching, with the rage of the elements, with cold, with hunger, and with thirst, no hope remained for the Messenians: the bold prophet declared to Aristomenes that the gods had decreed the fall of Messene, that the warning

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oracles were fulfilled. "Preserve," he cried, "what remain of your forces--save yourselves. Me the gods impel to fall with my country!" Thus saying, the soothsayer rushed on the enemy, and fell at last covered with wounds and satiated with the slaughter himself had made. Aristomenes called the Messenians round him, the women and the children were placed in the centre of the band, guarded by his own son and that of the prophet. Heading the troop himself, he rushed on the foe, and by his gestures and the shaking of his spear announced his intention to force a passage, and effect escape. Unwilling yet more to exasperate men urged to despair, the Spartans made way for the rest of the besieged.—So fell Ira!* The brave Messenians escaped to Mount Lycæum in Arcadia, and afterwards the greater part, invited by Anaxilaus, their own countryman, prince of the Dorian colony at Rhegium in Italy, conquered with him the Zanclæans of Sicily, and named the conquered town Messene. It still preserves the name.† But Aristomenes, retaining indomitable hatred to Sparta, refused to join the colony. Yet hoping a day of retribution, he

Probably B.C. 662.

* For the dates here given of the second Messenian war see Fast. Hell. vol. i. 190, and Appendix 2.

† Now called Messina.

went to Delphi. What counsel he there received is unrecorded. But the Deity ordained to Damagetes, Prince of Jalysus in Rhodes, to marry the daughter of the best man of Greece. Such a man the prince esteemed the hero of the Messenians, and wedded the third daughter of Aristomenes. Still bent on designs against the destroyers of his country, the patriot warrior repaired to Rhodes, where death delivered the Spartans from the terror of his revenge. A monument was raised to his memory, and that memory, distinguished by public honours, long made the boast of the Messenians, whether those in distant exile, or those subjected to the Spartan yoke. Thus ended the second Messenian war. Such of the Messenians as had not abandoned their country were reduced to Helotism. The Spartan territory extended, and the Spartan power secured, that haughty state rose slowly to pre-eminence over the rest of Greece; and preserved, amidst the advancing civilisation and refinement of her neighbours, the stern and awing likeness of the Heroic Age: —In the mountains of the Peloponnesus, the polished and luxurious Greeks beheld, retained from change as by a spell, the iron images of their Homeric ancestry!

CHAPTER VII.

GOVERNMENTS IN GREECE.

I. The return of the Heraclidæ occasioned consequences of which the most important were the least immediate. Wherever the Dorians forced a settlement, they dislodged such of the previous inhabitants as refused to succumb. Driven elsewhere to seek a home, the exiles found it often in yet fairer climes, and along more fertile soils. The example of these involuntary migrators became imitated wherever discontent prevailed or population was redundant: and hence, as I have already recorded, first arose those numerous colonies, which along the Asiatic shores, in the Grecian isles, on the plains of Italy, and even in Libya and in Egypt, were destined to give, as it were, a second youth to the parent states.

II. The ancient Greek constitution was that of an aristocracy, with a prince at the head.

Suppose a certain number of men, thus governed, to be expelled their native soil, united by a common danger and common suffering, to land on a foreign shore, to fix themselves with pain and labour in a new settlement—it is quite clear that a popular principle would insensibly have entered the forms of the constitution they transplanted. In the first place the power of the prince would be more circumscribed—in the next place, the free spirit of the aristocracy would be more diffused: the first, because the authority of the chief would rarely be derived from royal ancestry, or hallowed by prescriptive privilege; in most cases he was but a noble, selected from the ranks, and crippled by the jealousies, of his order: the second, because all who shared in the enterprise would in one respect rise at once to an aristocracy—they would be distinguished from the population of the state they colonized. Misfortune, sympathy, and change, would also contribute to sweep away many demarcations; and Authority was transmuted from a birthright into a trust, the moment it was withdrawn from the shelter of ancient custom, and made the gift of the living rather than a heritage from the dead. It was probable, too, that many of such colonies were founded by men, amongst whom was but

little disparity of rank : this would be especially the case with those which were the overflow of a redundant population ; — the great and the wealthy are never redundant !—the mass would thus ordinarily be composed of the discontented and the poor, and even where the aristocratic leaven was most strong, it was still the aristocracy of some defeated and humbled faction. So that in the average equality of the emigrators were the seeds of a new constitution ; and if they transplanted the form of monarchy, it already contained the genius of republicanism. Hence, colonies in the ancient, as in the modern world, advanced by giant strides towards popular principles. Maintaining a constant intercourse with their father-land, their own constitutions became familiar and tempting to the population of the countries they had abandoned ; and much of whatsoever advantages were derived from the soil they selected, and the commerce they found within their reach, was readily attributed only to their more popular constitutions ;— as, at this day, we find American prosperity held out to our example, not as the result of local circumstances, but as the creature of political institutions.

One principal cause of the republican forms of government that began (as, after the Dorian migration, the different tribes became settled in

those seats by which they are historically known) to spread throughout Greece, was, therefore, the establishment of colonies retaining constant intercourse with the parent states. A second cause is to be found in the elements of the previous constitutions of the Grecian states themselves, and the political principles which existed universally, even in the Heroic Ages: so that, in fact, the change from monarchy to republicanism was much less violent than at the first glance it would seem to our modern notions. The ancient kings, as described by Homer, possessed but a limited authority, like that of the Spartan kings —extensive in war, narrow in peace. It was evidently considered that the source of their authority was in the people. No notion seems to have been more universal among the Greeks than that it was for the community that all power was to be exercised. In Homer's time popular assemblies existed, and claimed the right of conferring privileges on rank. The nobles were ever jealous of the prerogative of the prince, and ever encroaching on his accidental weakness. In his sickness, his age, or his absence, the power of the state seems to have been wrested from his hands—the prey of the chiefs, or the dispute of contending factions. Nor was there in Greece that chivalric fealty to a *person* which charac-

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terises the North. From the earliest times it was not the MONARCH, but the STATE, that called forth the virtue of devotion, and inspired the enthusiasm of loyalty. Thus, in the limited prerogative of royalty, in the jealousy of the chiefs, in the right of popular assemblies, and, above all, in the silent and unconscious spirit of political theory, we may recognise in the early monarchies of Greece the germs of their inevitable dissolution. Another cause was in that singular separation of tribes, speaking a common language, and belonging to a common race, which characterised the Greeks. Instead of over-running a territory in one vast irruption, each section seized a small district, built a city, and formed an independent people.* Thus, in fact, the Hellenic governments were not those of a country, but of a town ; and the words "state" and "city" were synonymous. Municipal constitutions, in their very nature, are ever more

* In Phocis were no less than twenty-two states, (πόλεις;) in Bœotia, fourteen ; in Achaia, ten. The ancient political theorists held no community too small for independence, provided the numbers sufficed for its defence. We find from Plato that a society of five thousand freemen capable of bearing arms, was deemed powerful enough to constitute an independent state. One great cause of the ascendency of Athens and Sparta was that each of those cities had from an early period swept away the petty independent states in their several territories of Attica and Laconia.

or less republican; and, as in the Italian states, the corporation had only to shake off some power unconnected with, or hostile to it, to rise into a republic. To this it may be added that the true republican spirit is more easily established among mountain tribes imperfectly civilized, and yet fresh from the wildness of the natural life, than among old states, where luxury leaves indeed the desire, but has enervated the power of liberty, "as the marble from the quarry may be more readily wrought into the statue, than that on which the hand of the workman has already been employed."*

III. If the change from monarchy to republicanism was not very violent in itself, it appears to have been yet more smoothed away by gradual preparations. Monarchy was not abolished,—it declined. The direct line was broken, or some other excuse occurred for exchanging an hereditary for an elective monarchy; then the period of power became shortened, and from monarchy for life, it was monarchy only for a certain number of years: in most cases the name too (and how much is there in names!) was changed, and the title of ruler or magistrate substituted for that of king.

Thus, by no sudden leap of mind, by no vehement and short-lived revolutions, but gra-

* Machiavel, (Discor. lib. i. c. ii.)

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dually, insensibly, and permanently, monarchy ceased—a fashion, as it were, worn out and obsolete—and republicanism succeeded. But this republicanism at first was probably in no instance purely democratic. It was the chiefs who were the visible agents in the encroachments on the monarchic power—it was an aristocracy that succeeded monarchy. Sometimes this aristocracy was exceedingly limited in number, or the governing power was usurped by a particular faction or pre-eminent families: then it was called an OLIGARCHY. And this form of aristocracy appears generally to have been the most immediate successor of royalty. "The first polity," says Aristotle,* "that was established in Greece after the lapse of monarchies, was that of the members of the military class, and those wholly horsemen,". . . . "such republics, though called democracies, had a strong tendency to oligarchy, and even to royalty." † But the spirit of change still progressed: whether they were few or many, the aristocratic governors

* Lib. iv. c. 13.

† Aristotle cites among the advantages of wealth, that of being enabled to train horses. Wherever the nobility could establish among themselves a cavalry, the constitution was oligarchical. Yet, even in states which did not maintain a cavalry, (as Athens previous to the constitution of Solon,) an oligarchy was the first form of government that rose above the ruins of monarchy.

could not fail to open the door to farther innovations. For if many, they were subjected to dissensions among themselves—if few, they created odium in all who were excluded from power. Thus fell the oligarchies of Marseilles, Ister, and Heraclea. In the one case they were weakened by their own jealousies, in the other by the jealousies of their rivals. The progress of civilisation, and the growing habits of commerce, gradually introduced a medium between the populace and the chiefs. The MIDDLE CLASS slowly rose, and with it rose the desire of extended liberties and equal laws.*

IV. Now then appeared the class of DEMAGOGUES. The people had been accustomed to change. They had been led against monarchy, and found they had only resigned the one master to obtain the many:—A demagogue arose, sometimes one of their own order, more often a dissatisfied, ambitious, or impoverished noble: For they who have wasted their patrimony, as the Stagirite shrewdly observes, are great promoters of innovation! Party ran high—the state became divided—passions were aroused—and the popular leader became the popular idol.

* One principal method of increasing the popular action was by incorporating the neighbouring villages or wards in one municipality with the capital. By this the people gained both in number and in union.

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His life was probably often in danger from the resentment of the nobles, and it was always easy to assert that it was so endangered. He obtained a guard to protect him, conciliated the soldiers, seized the citadel, and rose at once from the head of the populace to the ruler of the state. Such was the common history of the tyrants of Greece, who never supplanted the kingly sway, (unless in the earlier ages, when, born to a limited monarchy, they extended their privileges beyond the law, as Pheidon of Argos,) but nearly always aristocracies or oligarchies.* I need scarcely observe that the word 'tyrant' was of very different signification in ancient times from that which it bears at present. It more nearly corresponded to our word 'usurper,' and denoted one who, by illegitimate means, whether of art or force, had usurped the supreme authority. A

* Sometimes in ancient Greece there arose a species of lawful tyrants, under the name of Æsymnetes. These were voluntarily chosen by the people, sometimes for life, sometimes for a limited period, and generally for the accomplishment of some particular object. Thus was Pittacus of Mitylene elected to conduct the war against the exiles. With the accomplishment of the object he abdicated his power. But the appointment of Æsymnetes can hardly be called a regular form of government. They soon became obsolete —the mere creatures of occasion. While they lasted, they bore a strong resemblance to the Roman dictators—a resemblance remarked by Dionysius, who quotes Theophrastus as agreeing with Aristotle in his account of the Æsymnetes.

tyrant might be mild or cruel—the father of the people, or their oppressor: he still preserved the name, and it was transmitted to his children. The merits of this race of rulers, and the unconscious benefits they produced, have not been justly appreciated, either by ancient or modern historians. Without her tyrants, Greece might never have established her democracies. As may be readily supposed, the man who, against powerful enemies, often from a low origin and with impoverished fortunes, had succeeded in ascending a throne, was usually possessed of no ordinary abilities. It was almost vitally necessary for him to devote those abilities to the cause and interests of the people. Their favour had alone raised him—numerous foes still surrounded him:—it was on the people alone that he could depend.

The wiser and more celebrated tyrants were characterized by an extreme modesty of deportment—they assumed no extraordinary pomp, no lofty titles—they left untouched, or rendered yet more popular, the outward forms and institutions of the government—they were not exacting in taxation—they affected to link themselves with the lowest orders, and their ascendency was usually productive of immediate benefit to the working classes, whom they employed in new fortifications, or new public buildings;—dazzling the

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citizens by a splendour that seemed less the ostentation of an individual than the prosperity of a state. But the aristocracy still remained their enemies, and it was against them, not against the people, that they directed their acute sagacities and unsparing energies. Every more politic tyrant was a Louis the Eleventh, weakening the nobles, creating a middle class. He effected his former object by violent and unscrupulous means. He swept away by death or banishment all who opposed his authority or excited his fears. He thus left nothing between the state and a democracy but himself; himself removed, democracy ensued naturally and of course. There are times in the history of all nations when liberty is best promoted—when civilisation is most rapidly expedited—when the arts are most luxuriantly nourished by a strict concentration of power in the hands of an individual,—and when the despot is but the representative of the popular will.* At such times did the tyrannies in Greece mostly flourish, and they may almost be said to cease with the necessity which called

* For as the great Florentine has well observed, "To found well a government, one man is the best—once established, the care and execution of the laws should be transferred to many."—(*Machiavel, Discor.* lib. i. ch. 9.) And thus, a tyranny builds the edifice, which the republic hastens to inhabit.

them forth. The energy of these masters of a revolution opened the intercourse with other states; their interests extended commerce; their policy broke up the sullen barriers of oligarchical prejudice and custom; their fears found perpetual vent for the industry of a population whom they dreaded to leave in indolence; their genius appreciated the arts—their vanity fostered them. Thus they interrupted the course of liberty only to improve, to concentre, to advance its results. Their dynasty never lasted long; the oldest tyranny in Greece endured but a hundred years* —so enduring only from its mildness. The son of the tyrant rarely inherited his father's sagacity and talents: he sought to strengthen his power by severity;—discontent ensued, and his fall was sudden and complete. Usually, then, such of the aristocracy as had been banished were recalled, but not invested with their former privileges. The constitution became more or less democratic. It is true that Sparta, who lent her powerful aid in destroying tyrannies, aimed at replacing them by oligarchies—but

* That of Orthagoras and his sons in Sicyon. "Of all governments," says Aristotle, "that of an oligarchy, or of a tyrant, is the least permanent." A quotation that cannot be too often pressed on the memory of those reasoners who insist so much on the brief duration of the ancient republics.

the effort seldom produced a permanent result: the more the aristocracy was narrowed, the more certain was its fall. If the middle class were powerful—if commerce thrived in the state—the former aristocracy of birth was soon succeeded by an aristocracy of property, (called a timocracy,) and this was in its nature certain of democratic advances. The moment you widen the suffrage, you may date the commencement of universal suffrage. He who enjoys certain advantages from the possession of ten acres, will excite a party against him in those who have nine; and the arguments that had been used for the franchise of the one are equally valid for the franchise of the other. Limitations of power by property are barriers against a tide which perpetually advances. Timocracy, therefore, almost invariably paved the way to democracy. But still the old aristocratic faction, constantly invaded, remained powerful, stubborn, and resisting, and there was scarcely a state in Greece that did not contain the two parties which we find to-day in England, and in all free states—the party of the movement to the future, and the party of recurrence to the past;—I say the past, for in politics there is no present! Wherever party exists, if the one desire fresh innovations, so the other secretly wishes not to preserve what remains but to restore what has been. This

fact it is necessary always to bear in mind in examining the political contests of the Athenians. For in most of their domestic convulsions we find the cause in the efforts of the anti-popular party less to resist new encroachments than to revive departed institutions. But though in most of the Grecian states were two distinct orders, and the Eupatrids, or 'Well-born,' were a class distinct from, and superior to, that of the commonalty, we should err in supposing that the separate orders made the great political divisions. As in England the more ancient of the nobles are often found in the popular ranks, so in the Grecian states many of the Eupatrids headed the democratic party. And this division amongst themselves, while it weakened the power of the Well-born, contributed to prevent any deadly or ferocious revolutions: for it served greatly to soften the excesses of the predominant faction, and every collision found mediators between the contending parties in some who were at once friends of the People and members of the Nobility. Nor should it be forgotten that the triumph of the popular party was always more moderate than that of the antagonist faction—as the history of Athens will hereafter prove.

V. The legal constitutions of Greece were

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four—Monarchy, Oligarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy; the illegal, was Tyranny in a twofold shape, viz. whether it consisted in an usurped monarchy or an usurped oligarchy. Thus the oligarchy of the Thirty in Athens was no less a tyranny than the single government of Pisistratus. Even democracy had its illegal or corrupt form—in OCHLOCRACY or mob rule; for democracy did not signify the rule of the lower orders alone, but of all the people—the highest as the lowest. If the highest became by law excluded—if the populace confined the legislative and executive authorities to their own order—then democracy, or the government of a whole people, virtually ceased, and became the government of a *part* of the people—a form equally unjust and illegitimate—equally an abuse in itself, whether the dominant and exclusive portion were the nobles or the mechanics. Thus in modern yet analogous history, when the middle class of Florence expelled the nobles from any share of the government, they established a monopoly under the name of liberty; and the resistance of the nobles was the lawful struggle of patriots and of freemen for an inalienable privilege and a natural right.

VI. We should remove some very important

prejudices from our minds, if we could once subscribe to a fact plain in itself, but which the contests of modern party have utterly obscured—that in the mere forms of their government, the Greek republics cannot fairly be pressed into the service of those who in existing times would attest the evils, or proclaim the benefits, of constitutions purely democratic. In the first place, they were *not* democracies, even in their most democratic shape;—the vast majority of the working classes were the enslaved population. And, therefore, to increase the popular tendencies of the republic was, in fact, only to increase the liberties of the few. We may fairly doubt whether the worst evils of the ancient republics, in the separation of ranks, and the war between rich and poor, were not the necessary results of slavery. We may doubt, with equal probability, whether much of the lofty spirit, and the universal passion for public affairs, whence emanated the enterprise, the competition, the patriotism, and the glory of the ancient cities, could have existed without a subordinate race to carry on the drudgeries of daily life. It is clear, also, that much of the intellectual greatness of the several states arose from the exceeding smallness of their territories—the concentration of internal power, and the perpetual emulation with neighbouring and kindred states nearly equal in civili-

sation ; it is clear, too, that much of the vicious parts of their character, and yet much of their more brilliant, arose from the absence of the PRESS. Their intellectual state was that of men *talked* to, not *written* to. Their imagination was perpetually called forth—their deliberative reason rarely ;—they were the fitting audience for an orator, whose art is effective in proportion to the impulse and the passion of those he addresses. Nor must it be forgotten that the Representative System, which is the proper conductor of the democratic action, if not wholly unknown to the Greeks,* and if unconsciously practised in the Spartan ephoralty, was at least never existent in the more democratic states. And assemblies of the whole people are compatible only with those small nations of which the city is the country. Thus, it would be impossible for us to propose the abstract constitution of any ancient state as a warning or an example to modern countries which possess territories large in extent—which subsist

* Besides the representation necessary to confederacies—such as the Amphictyonic League, &c., a representative system was adopted at Mantinea, where the officers were named by deputies chosen by the people. "This form of democracy," says Aristotle, "existed amongst the shepherds and husbandmen of Arcadia;" and was probably not uncommon with the ancient Pelasgians. But the *μυριοι* of Arcadia had not the legislative power.

without a slave population—which substitute representative councils for popular assemblies—and which direct the intellectual tastes and political habits of a people, not by oratory and conversation, but through the more calm and dispassionate medium of the Press. This principle settled, it may perhaps be generally conceded, that on comparing the democracies of Greece with all other contemporary forms of government, we find them the most favourable to mental cultivation—not more exposed than others to internal revolutions—usually, in fact, more durable,—more mild and civilized in their laws—and that the worst tyranny of the Demus, whether at home or abroad, never equalled that of an oligarchy or a single ruler. That in which the ancient Republics are properly models to us, consists not in the form but the spirit of their legislation. They teach us that patriotism is most promoted by bringing all classes into public and constant intercourse—that intellect is most luxuriant wherever the competition is widest and most unfettered—and that legislators can create no rewards and invent no penalties equal to those which are silently engendered by society itself—while it maintains, elaborated into a system, the desire of glory and the dread of shame.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIEF SURVEY OF ARTS, LETTERS, AND PHILOSOPHY, IN GREECE, PRIOR TO THE LEGISLATION OF SOLON.

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I. Before concluding this introductory portion of my work, it will be necessary to take a brief survey of the intellectual state of Greece prior to that wonderful era of Athenian greatness which commenced with the Laws of Solon. At this period the *continental* states of Greece had produced little in that literature which is now the heirloom of the world. Whether under her monarchy, or the oligarchical constitution that succeeded it, the depressed and languid genius of Athens had given no earnest of the triumphs she was afterwards destined to accomplish. Her literature began, though it cannot be said to have ceased, with her democracy. The solitary and doubtful claim of the birth—but not the

fl. Tyrtæus. B.C. 683.

song—of Tyrtæus, is the highest literary honour to which the earlier age of Attica can pretend;

and many of the Dorian states—even Sparta itself—appear to have been more prolific in poets than the city of Æschylus and Sophocles. But throughout all Greece, from the earliest time, was a general passion for poetry, however fugitive the poets. The poems of Homer are the most ancient of profane writings—but the poems of Homer themselves attest that they had many, nor ignoble, precursors. Not only do they attest it in their very excellence—not only in their reference to other poets—but in the general manner of life attributed to chiefs and heroes. The lyre and the song afford the favourite entertainment at the banquet.* And Achilles, in the interval of his indignant repose, exchanges the deadly sword for the 'silver harp,'

"And sings
The immortal deeds of heroes and of kings." †

II. Ample tradition and the internal evidence of the Homeric poems, prove the Iliad at least to have been the composition of an Asiatic

* "Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night,
Music, the banquet's most refined delight."
Pope's Odyssey, book xxi. 473.

It is stronger in the original—

Μολπῇ καὶ φόρμιγγι· τὰ γὰρ τ' ἀναθήματα δαιτός.

† Iliad, book ix., Pope's Translation, line 250.

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Greek; and though the time in which he flourished is yet warmly debated, the most plausible chronology places him about the time of the Ionic migration, or somewhat less than two hundred years after the Trojan war. The following lines in the speech of Juno in the 4th book of the Iliad are supposed by some * to allude to the Return of the Heraclidæ and the Dorian conquests in the Peloponnesus:—

"Three towns are Juno's on the Grecian plains,
More dear than all th' extended earth contains—
Mycenæ, Argos, and the Spartan Wall,—
These may'st thou raze, nor I forbid their fall;
'Tis not in me the vengeance to remove—
The crime 's sufficient that they share my love." †

And it certainly does seem to me, that in a reference so distinct to the three great Peloponnesian cities which the Dorians invaded and possessed, Homer makes as broad an allusion to the conquests of the Heraclidæ, not only as would be consistent with the pride of an Ionic Greek in attesting the triumphs of the national Dorian foe, but as the nature of a theme cast in a distant period, and remarkably removed, in its general conduct, from the historical detail of

* Heyne, F. Clinton, &c.

† Pope's Translation, b. iv. line 75, &c.

subsequent events, would warrant to the poet.* And here I may observe, that if the date thus assigned to Homer be correct, the very subject of the Iliad might have been suggested by the consequences of the Dorian irruption. Homer relates,

> "Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
> Of woes unnumbered."

But Achilles is the native hero of that Thessalian district, which was the earliest settlement of the Dorian family. Agamemnon, whose injuries he resents, is the monarch of the great Achæan race, whose dynasty and dominion the Dorians are destined to overthrow. It is true that at the time of the Trojan war, the Dorians had migrated from Phthiotis to Phocis—it is true that Achilles was not of Dorian extraction; still there would be an interest attached to the singular coincidence of place; as, though the English are no descendants from the Britons, we yet associate the British history with our own: hence it seems

* At least, this passage is sufficient to refute the arguments of Mr. Mitford, and men more learned than that historian, who, in taking for their premises as an *indisputable* fact, the extraordinary assumption, that Homer never once has alluded to the return of the Heraclidæ, arrive at a conclusion very illogical, even if the premises were true,—viz. that therefore Homer preceded the date of that great revolution.

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to me, though I believe the conjecture is new, that it is not the *whole* Trojan war, but that *episode* in the Trojan war (otherwise unimportant) illustrated by the wrath of Achilles, which awakens the inspiration of the poet. In fact, if under the exordium of the Iliad there lurk no typical signification, the exordium is scarce appropriate to the subject. For the wrath of Achilles did not bring upon the Greeks woes more mighty than the ordinary course of war would have destined them to endure. But if the Grecian audience, (exiles, and the posterity of exiles,) to whom, on Asiatic shores, Homer recited his poem, associated the hereditary feud of Achilles and Agamemnon with the strife between the ancient warriors of Phthiotis and Achaia; *then*, indeed, the opening lines assume a solemn and prophetic significance, and their effect must have been electrical upon a people ever disposed to trace in the mythi of their ancestry the legacies of a dark and ominous fatality, by which each present suffering was made the inevitable result of an immemorial cause.*

* I own that this seems to me the most probable way of accounting for the singular and otherwise disproportioned importance attached by the ancient poets to that episode in the Trojan war, which relates to the feud of Achilles and Agamemnon. As the first recorded enmity between the great Achæans and the warriors of Phthiotis, it would

III. The ancients unanimously believed the Iliad the production of a single poet—in recent times a contrary opinion has been started; and in Germany, at this moment, the most fashionable belief is, that that wonderful poem was but a collection of rhapsodies by various poets, arranged and organized by Pisistratus and the poets of his day;—a theory a scholar may support, but which no poet could ever have invented! For this proposition the principal reasons alleged are these:—It is asserted as an "indisputable fact," "that the art of writing, and the use of manageable writing materials, were entirely, or all but entirely, unknown in Greece and its islands at the supposed date of the composition of the Iliad and Odyssey; that, if so, these poems could not have been committed to writing during the time of such their composition;—that, in a question of comparative probabilities like this, it is a much grosser improbability that even the single Iliad, amounting, after all curtailments and expungings, to upwards of 15,000 hexameter lines, should have been actually conceived and perfected in the brain of one man, with no other help but his own or others' memory, than that it should in fact be

have a solemn and historical interest both to the conquering Dorians and the defeated Achæans, flattering to the national vanity of either people.

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the result of the labours of several distinct authors;—that if the Odyssey be counted, the improbability is doubled;—that if we add, upon the authority of Thucydides and Aristotle, the Hymns and Margites, not to say the Batrachomyomachia, that which was improbable becomes morally impossible;—that all that has been so often said as to the fact of as many verses or more having been committed to memory, is beside the point in question, which is not whether 15,000 or 30,000 lines may not be learnt by heart from print or manuscript, but whether one man can originally compose a poem of that length, which, rightly or not, shall be thought to be a perfect model of symmetry and consistency of parts, without the aid of writing materials;—that, admitting the superior probability of such an achievement in a primitive age, we know nothing actually similar or analogous to it; and that it so transcends the common limits of intellectual power, as at the least to merit, with as much justice as the opposite opinion, the character of improbability." *

And upon such arguments the identity of Homer is to be destroyed! Let us pursue them seriatim.

* I adopt the analysis of the anti-Homer arguments so clearly given by Mr. Coleridge in his eloquent Introduction to the Study of the Greek Poets. Homer, p. 39.

1st "The art and the use of manageable writing materials were entirely, or all but entirely, unknown in Greece and its islands at the supposed date of the composition of the Iliad and Odyssey."

The whole argument against the unity of Homer rests upon this assertion; and yet this assertion it is impossible to prove! It is allowed, on the contrary, that alphabetical characters were introduced in Greece by Cadmus—nay, inscriptions believed by the best antiquaries to bear date before the Trojan war are found even amongst the Pelasgi of Italy. Dionysius informs us that the Pelasgi first introduced letters into Italy. But in answer to this, it is said that letters were used only for inscriptions on stone or wood, and not for the preservation of writings so voluminous. If this were the case, I scarcely see why the Greeks should have professed so grateful a reminiscence of the gift of Cadmus,—the mere inscription of a few words on stone would not be so very popular or beneficial an invention! But the Phœnicians had constant intercourse with the Egyptians and Hebrews; among both those nations the art and materials of writing were known. The Phœnicians, far more enterprising than either, must have been fully acquainted with their means of written communication—and indeed we are assured that they were so. Now, if a Phœnician had imparted so much of

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the art to Greece as the knowledge of a written alphabet, is it probable that he would have suffered the communication to cease there? The Phœnicians were a commercial people—their colonies in Greece were for commercial purposes,—would they have wilfully and voluntarily neglected the most convenient mode of commercial correspondence?—importing just enough of the art to suffice for inscriptions of no use but to the natives, would they have stopped short precisely at that point when the art became useful to themselves? And in vindicating that most able people from so wilful a folly, have we no authority in history as well as common sense? We have the authority of Herodotus! When he informs us that the Phœnicians communicated letters to the Ionians, he adds, that by a very ancient custom the Ionians called their books *diptheræ*, or skins, because at a time when the plant of the biblos or papyrus was *scarce*,* they used instead of it the skins of

* εν σπανει βιβλων, are the words of Herodotus. Leaves and the bark of trees were also used from a very remote period previous to the common use of the papyrus, and when we are told that leaves would not suffice for works of any length or duration, it must not be forgotten that in a much later age it was upon leaves (and mutton bones) that the Koran was transcribed. The rudest materials are sufficient for the preservation of what men deem it their interest to preserve!

goats and sheep—a custom he himself witnessed amongst barbarous nations. Were such materials used only for inscriptions relative to a religious dedication, or a political compact? No; for then wood or stone—the temple or the pillar—would have been the material for the inscription,—they must, then, have been used for a more literary purpose; and verse was the first form of literature. I grant that prior, and indeed long subsequent to the time of Homer, the art of writing (as with us in the dark ages) would be very partially known—that in many parts of Greece, especially European Greece, it might scarcely ever be used but for brief inscriptions. But that is nothing to the purpose;—if known at all—to any Ionian trader—even to any neighbouring Asiatic—even to any Phœnician settler—there is every reason to suppose that Homer himself, or a contemporary disciple and reciter of his verses, would have learnt both the art and the use of the materials which could best have ensured the fame of the poet, or assisted the memory of the reciter. And, though Plutarch in himself alone is no authority, he is not to be rejected as a corroborative testimony when he informs us that Lycurgus collected and *transcribed* the poems of Homer; and that writing was then known in Greece is evident by the very ordinance of Lycurgus that his laws

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should not be written. But Lycurgus is made by Apollodorus contemporary with Homer himself; and this belief appears to receive the sanction of the most laborious and profound of modern chronologers.* I might adduce various other arguments in support of those I have already advanced; but I have said enough already to show that it is not an "*indisputable fact*" that Homer could not have been acquainted with writing materials; and that the whole battery erected to demolish the fame of the greatest of human geniuses has been built upon a most uncertain and unsteady foundation. It may be impossible to prove that Homer's poems were written, but it is equally impossible to prove that they were not—and if it were necessary for the identity of Homer, that his poems should have been written, that necessity would have been one of the strongest proofs, not that Homer did *not* exist, but that writing *did!*

But let us now suppose it proved that writing materials for a literary purpose were unknown, and examine the assertions built upon that hypothesis.

2nd. That if these poems could not have been committed to writing during the time of their composition, it is a much grosser improbability that even the single Iliad, amounting, after all curtailments and expungings, to upwards of 15,000 hexameter lines, should have been actually conceived and

* See Clinton's, F. H. vol. i. p. 145.

perfected in the brain of one man, with no other help but his own or others' memory, than that it should, in fact, be the result of the labours of several distinct authors."

I deny this altogether. "The improbability" might be "grosser" if the Iliad had been composed in a day! But if, as any man of common sense would acknowledge, it was composed in parts or 'fyttes' of moderate length at a time, no extraordinary power of memory, or tension of thought, would have been required by the poet. Such parts, once recited and admired, became known and learned by a hundred professional bards, and were thus orally published, as it were, in detached sections, years perhaps before the work was completed. All that is said, therefore, about the difficulty of composing so long a poem without writing materials, is but a jargon of words. Suppose no writing materials existed, yet as soon as portions of a few hundred lines at a time were committed to the memory of other minstrels, the author would, in those minstrels, have living books whereby to refresh his memory, and could even, by their help, polish and amend what was already composed. It would not then have been necessary for the poet himself perfectly and verbally to remember the whole work. He had his tablets of reference in the hearts and

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lips of others, and even, if it were necessary that he himself should retain the entire composition, the constant habit of recital, the constant exercise of memory, would render such a task by no means impracticable or unprecedented. As for the unity of the poem, thus composed, it would have been, as it is, the unity, not of technical rules and pedantic criticism, but the unity of interest, character, imagery, and thought—a unity which required no written references to maintain it, but which was the essential quality of one master-mind, and ought to be, to all plain men, an irrefragable proof that one mind alone conceived and executed the work.

IV. So much for the alleged improbability of one author for the Iliad. But with what face can these critics talk of "probability," when, in order to get rid of one Homer, they ask us to believe in twenty! Can our wildest imagination form more monstrous hypotheses than these, viz.—that several poets, all possessed of the very highest order of genius, (never before or since surpassed,) lived in the same age — that that genius was so exactly similar in each, that we cannot detect in the thoughts, the imagery, the conception and treatment of character, human and divine, as manifest in each, the least variety in these wonderful

minds—that out of the immense store of their national legends, they all agreed in selecting one subject, the war of Troy—that of that subject they all agreed in selecting only one portion of time, from the insult of Achilles to the redemption of the body of Hector—that their different mosaics so nicely fitted one into the other, that by the mere skill of an able editor they were joined into a whole, so symmetrical that the acutest ingenuity of ancient Greece could never discover the imposture*—and that, of all these poets, so miraculous in their genius, no single name, save that of Homer, was recorded

* Critics, indeed, discover some pretended gaps and interpolations; but these, if conceded, are no proof against the unity of Homer; the wonder is, that there should be so few of such interpolations, considering the barbarous age which intervened between their composition and the time in which they were first carefully edited and collected. With more force it is urged against the argument in favour of the unity of Homer, derived from the unity of the style and character, that there are passages which modern critics agree to be additions to the original poems, made centuries afterwards, and yet unsuspected by the ancients; and that in these additions—such as the last books of the Iliad, with many others less important—the Homeric unity of style and character is still sustained. We may answer, however, that, in the first place, we have a right to be sceptical as to these discoveries—many of them rest on very insufficient critical grounds; in the second place, if we grant

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by the general people to whom they sung, or claimed by the peculiar tribe, whose literature they ought to have immortalized? If every thing else were wanting to prove the unity of Homer, this prodigious extravagance of assump-

them, it is one thing whether a forged addition be introduced into a poem, and another thing whether the poem be *all additions;* in the third place, we may observe, that successful imitations of the style and characters of an author, however great, may be made many centuries afterwards with tolerable ease, and by a very inferior genius, although at the time he wrote or sung, it is not easy to suppose that half a dozen, or more poets, shared his spirit or style. It is a very common scholastic trick to imitate, now-a-days, and with considerable felicity, the style of the greatest writers, ancient and modern. But the unity of Homer does not depend on the question whether imitative forgeries were introduced into a great poem, but whether a multitude of great poets combined in one school on one subject. An ingenious student of Shakspeare, or the elder dramatists, might impose upon the public credulity a new scene, or even a new play, as belonging to Shakspeare, but would that be any proof that a company of Shakspeares combined in the production of Macbeth? I own, by the way, that I am a little doubtful as to our acumen in ascertaining what is Homeric, and what is not, seeing that Schlegel, after devoting half a life to Shakspeare, (whose works are composed in a living language, the authenticity of each of which works a living nation can attest,) nevertheless, attributes to that poet a catalogue of plays, of which Shakspeare is perfectly innocent!—but, to be sure. Steevens does the same!

tion, into which a denial of that unity has driven men of no common learning and intellect, would be sufficient to establish it.

3d. "That if the Odyssey be counted, the improbability is doubled; that if we add, upon the authority of Thucydides and Aristotle, the Hymns and Margites, not to say the Batrachomyomachia, that which was improbable becomes morally impossible."

Were these last-mentioned poems Homer's, there would yet be nothing improbable in the invention and composition of minor poems without writing materials; and the fact of his having composed one long poem, throws no difficulty in the way of his composing short ones. We have already seen that the author need not himself have remembered them all his life. But this argument is not honest, for the critics who have produced it agree in the same breath, when it suits their purpose, that the Hymns, &c. are *not* Homer's—and in this I concur with their, and the almost universal, opinion.

The remaining part of the analysis of the hostile argument has already been disposed of in connexion with the first proposition.

It now remains to say a few words upon the authorship of the Odyssey.

V. The question, whether or not the two

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epics of the Iliad and Odyssey were the works of the same poet, is a very different one from that which we have just discussed. Distinct and separate, indeed, are the inquiries whether Greece might produce, at certain intervals of time, two great epic poets, selecting opposite subjects—and whether Greece produced a score or two of great poets, from whose desultory remains the mighty whole of the Iliad was arranged. Even the ancients of the Alexandrine school did not attribute the Odyssey to the author of the Iliad. The theme selected—the manners described—the mythological spirit—are all widely different in the two works, and one is evidently of more recent composition than the other. But, for my own part, I do not think it has been yet clearly established that all these acknowledged differences are incompatible with the same authorship. If the Iliad were written in youth, the travels of the poet, the change of mind produced by years and experience, the facility with which an ancient Greek changed or remodelled his pliant mythology, the rapidity with which, (in the quick developement of civilisation in Greece,) important changes in society and manners were wrought, might all concur in producing, from the mature age of the poet, a poem very different to that which he composed

in youth. And the various undetected interpolations and alterations supposed to be foisted into the Odyssey may have originated such detailed points of difference as present the graver obstacles to this conjecture. Regarding the Iliad and Odyssey as wholes, they are so analogous in all the highest and rarest attributes of genius, that it is almost as impossible to imagine two Homers as it is two Shakspeares. Nor is there such a contrast between the Iliad and the Odyssey as there is between any one play of Shakspeare's and another.* Still, I should warn the general reader, that the utmost opposition that can reasonably and effectually be made to those who assign to different authors these several epics, limits itself rather to doubt than to denial.

VI. It is needless to criticise these immortal masterpieces; not that criticism upon them is yet exhausted—not that a most useful, and even novel analysis of their merits and character may not yet be performed, nor that the most striking and brilliant proofs of the unity of each poem,

* That Pisistratus, or his son, assisted by the poets of his day, did more than collect, arrange, and emend poems already in high repute, we have not only no authority to suppose, but much evidence to contradict. Of the true services of Pisistratus to Homer more hereafter.

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separately considered, may not be established by one who shall, with fitting powers, undertake the delightful task of deducing the individuality of the poet, from the individualizing character of his creations, and the peculiar attributes of his genius. With human works, as with the divine, the main proof of the unity of the author is in his fidelity to himself:—Not then as a superfluous, but as far too lengthened and episodical a labour, if worthily performed, do I forego at present a critical survey of the two poems popularly ascribed to Homer.

The early genius of Greece devoted itself largely to subjects similar to those which employed the Homeric muse. At a later period—probably dating at the Alexandrian age—a vast collection of ancient poems was arranged into what is termed the "Epic Cycle;" these commenced at the Theogony, and concluded with the adventures of Telemachus. Though no longer extant, the Cyclic poems enjoyed considerable longevity. The greater part were composed between the years 775 B.C. and 566 B.C. They were extant in the time of Proclus, A.D 450; the eldest therefore endured at least twelve, the most recent ten centuries;—save a few scattered lines, their titles alone remain, solitary tokens, yet floating above the dark oblivion which has

swept over the epics of thirty bards! But, by the common assent, alike of the critics and the multitude, none of these approached the remote age, still less the transcendent merits, of the Homeric poems. BOOK I. CHAP. VIII.

VII. But, of earlier date than these disciples of Homer, is a poetry of a class fundamentally distinct from the Homeric, viz. the collection attributed to Hesiod. Of one of these only, a rustic and homely poem called "Works and Days," was Hesiod considered the author by his immediate countrymen, (the Bœotians of Helicon;) but the more general belief assigned to the fertility of his genius a variety of other works, some of which, if we may judge by the titles, aimed at a loftier vein.* And were he only the author of the "Works and Days"—a poem of very insignificant merit†—it would be scarcely possible to account for the high estimation in which Hesiod was held by the Greeks, often compared, and sometimes preferred, to the mighty and majestic Homer. We must either, then, consider Hesiod as the author

* 'The descent of Theseus with Pirithous into hell,' &c.—Paus. ix. c. 31.

† Especially if with the Bœotians we are to consider the most poetical passage (the introductory lines to the Muses) a spurious interpolation.

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of many writings superior perhaps to what we now possess, or, as is more plausibly and popularly supposed by modern critics, the representative and type, as it were, of a great school of national poetry. And it has been acutely suggested that, viewing the pastoral and lowly occupation he declares himself to pursue,* combined with the subjects of his muse, and the place of his birth, we may believe the name of Hesiod to have been the representative of the poetry, not of the victor lords, but of the conquered people, expressive of their pursuits, and illustrative of their religion. This will account for the marked and marvellous difference between the martial and aristocratic strain of Homer, and the peaceful and rustic verse of Hesiod,† as well as for the distinction no less visible between the stirring mythology of the one, and the thoughtful theogony of the other. If this hypothesis be accepted, the Hesiodic era might very probably have com-

* A herdsman.

† I cannot omit a tradition recorded by Pausanias. A leaden table near the fountain was shown by the Bœotians as that on which the "Works and Days" *was written.* The poems of Hesiod certainly do not appear so adapted to recital as perusal. Yet, by the most plausible chronology, they were only composed about one hundred years after those of Homer!

menced before the Homeric, (although what is now ascribed to Hesiod is evidently of later date than the Iliad and the Odyssey.) And Hesiod is to Homer what the Pelasgic genius was to the Hellenic.*

VIII. It will be obvious to all who study what I may call the natural history of poetry, that short hymns or songs must long have preceded the gigantic compositions of Homer. Linus and Thamyris, and, more disputably, Orpheus, are recorded to have been the precursors of Homer, though the poems ascribed to them (some of which still remain) were of much later date. Almost coëval with the Grecian gods were doubtless religious hymns in their honour. And the germ of the great lyrical poetry that we now possess was in the rude chaunts of the warlike

* The Aones, Hyantes, and other tribes, which I consider part of the great Pelasgic family, were expelled from Bœotia by Thracian hordes.[1] Some of the population must, however, have remained—the peasantry of the land; and in Hesiod we probably possess the national poetry, and arrive at the national religion, of the old Pelasgi.

[1] They afterwards returned in the time of the Dorian immigration.

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Dorians to that Apollo who was no less the Inspirer than the Protector. The religion of the Greeks preserved and dignified the poetry it created; and the bard, "beloved by gods as men," became invested, as well with a sacred character as a popular fame. Beneath that cheerful and familiar mythology, even the comic genius sheltered its license, and found its subjects. Not only do the earliest of the comic dramatists seem to have sought in mythic fables their characters and plots, but far before the DRAMA itself arose in any of the Grecian states, comic recital prepared the way for comic representation. In the eighth book of the Odyssey, the splendid Alcinous and the pious Ulysses listen with delight to the story, even broadly ludicrous, how Vulcan nets and exposes Venus and her war-god lover—

> "All heaven beholds imprisoned as they lie,
> And unextinguished laughter shakes the sky."

And this singular and well-known effusion shows, not only how grave and reverent an example Epicharmus had for his own audacious portraiture of the infirmities of the Olympian family, but how immemorially and how deeply fixed in the

popular spirit was the disposition to draw from the same source the elements of humour and of awe.

But, however ancient the lyrical poetry of Greece, its masterpieces of art were composed long subsequent to the Homeric poems; and, no doubt, greatly influenced by acquaintance with those fountains of universal inspiration. I think it might be shown that lyrical poetry developed itself, in its more elaborate form, earliest in those places where the poems of Homer are most likely to have been familiarly known.

The peculiar character of the Greek lyrical poetry can only be understood by remembering its inseparable connexion with music; and the general application of both, not only to religious but political purposes. The Dorian states regarded the lyre and the song as powerful instruments upon the education, the manners, and the national character of their citizens. With them these arts were watched and regulated by the law, and the poet acquired something of the social rank, and aimed at much of the moral design, of a statesman and a legislator: while, in the Ionian states, the wonderful stir and agitation, the changes and experiments in government, the rapid growth of luxury, commerce, and civilisation, afforded to a poetry

which was not, as with us, considered a detached, unsocial, and solitary art, but which was associated with every event of actual life—occasions of vast variety—themes of universal animation. The eloquence of poetry will always be more exciting in its appeals—the love for poetry always more diffused throughout a people, in proportion as it is less written than recited. How few, even at this day, will read a poem!—what crowds will listen to a song! Recitation transfers the stage of effect from the closet to the multitude—the public becomes an audience, the poet an orator. And when we remember that the poetry, thus created, embodying the most vivid, popular, animated subjects of interest, was united with all the pomp of festival and show—all the grandest, the most elaborate, and artful effects of music—we may understand why the true genius of lyrical composition has passed for ever away from the modern world.

As early as between 708 and 665 B.C. Archilochus brought to perfection a poetry worthy of loftier passions than those which mostly animated his headstrong and angry genius. In 625, (thirty-one years before the legislation of Solon,) flourished Arion, the Lesbian, who, at Corinth, carried to extraordinary perfection the

heroic adaptation of song to choral music. In 611, flourished the Sicilian, Stersichorus—no unworthy rival of Arion;—while simultaneously, in strains less national and Grecian, and more resembling the inspiration of modern minstrels, Alcæus vented his burning and bitter spirit;—and Sappho, (whose chaste and tender muse it was reserved for the chivalry of a northern student, five-and-twenty centuries after the hand was cold and the tongue was mute, to vindicate from the longest continued calumny that genius ever endured,)* gave to the most ardent of human passions the most delicate colouring of female sentiment. Perhaps, of all that Greece has bequeathed to us, nothing is so perfect in its concentration of real feeling as the fragments of Sappho. In one poem of a few lines—nor that, alas! transmitted to us complete—she has given a picture of the effect of love upon one who loves, to which volumes of the most eloquent description could scarcely add a single new touch of natural pathos—so subtle is it, yet so simple. I cannot pass over in silence the fragments of Mimnermus—they seem of an order so little akin to the usual character of Grecian poetry; there is in them a thoughtful though gloomy sadness, that belongs rather to the deep northern imagination,

Mimnermus fl. B.C. 630.

* Welcker.

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than the brilliant fancies of the West; their melancholy is mixed with something half intellectual—half voluptuous—indicative of the mournful, but interesting wisdom of satiety. Mimnermus is a principal model of the Latin elegiac writers—and Propertius compares his love verses with those of Homer. Mimnermus did not invent the elegiac form, (for it was first applied to warlike inspiration by another Ionian poet, Callinus;) but he seems the founder of what we now call the elegiac spirit in its association of the sentiment of melancholy with the passion of love.

IX. While such was the state of POETRY in Greece —torpid in the Ionian Athens, but already prodigal in her kindred states of Asia and the Isles;—gravely honoured, rather than produced, in Sparta;—splendidly welcomed, rather than home-born, in Corinth;—the Asiatic colonies must also claim the honour of the advance of the sister arts. But, in architecture, the Dorian states of European Greece, Sicyon, Ægina, and the luxurious Corinth, were no unworthy competitors with Ionia.

In the Heroic times, the Homeric poems, especially the Odyssey, attest the refinement and skill to which many of the imitative arts of Grecian civilisation had attained. In embroi-

dery, the high-born occupation of Helen and Penelope, were attempted the most complex and difficult designs; and it is hard to suppose that these subjects could have been wrought upon garments with sufficient fidelity to warrant the praise of a poet who evidently wrote from experience of what he had seen, if the art of DRAWING had not been also carried to some excellence—although to PAINTING itself the poet makes none but dubious and obscure allusions. Still, if, on the one hand,* in embroidery, and upon arms, (as the shield of Achilles,) delineation in its more complex and minute form was attempted, —and if, on the other hand, the use of colours was known, (which it was, as applied not only to garments but to ivory,) it could not have been long before two such kindred elements of the same art were united. Although it is contended by many that rude stones or beams were the earliest objects of Grecian worship, and though it is certain that in several places such emblems of the Deity preceded the worship of images,

* The deadly signs which are traced by Prœtus on the tablets of which Bellerophon was the bearer, and which are referred to in the Iliad, are generally supposed by the learned to have been pictorial, and, as it were, hieroglyphical figures; my own belief, and the easiest interpretation of the passage, is, that they were alphabetical characters—in a word, writing, not painting.

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yet to the superstitious art of the rude Pelasgi in their earliest age, uncouth and half-formed statues of Hermes are attributed, and the idol is commemorated by traditions almost as antique as those which attest the sanctity of the *fetiche*.* In the Homeric age, SCULPTURE in metals, and on a large scale, was certainly known. By the door of Alcinous, the king of an island in the Ionian sea, stand rows of dogs in gold and silver —in his hall, upon pedestals, are golden statues of boys holding torches; and that such sculpture was even then dedicated to the gods is apparent by a well-known passage in the earlier poem of the Iliad: which represents Theano, the Trojan priestess of Minerva, placing the offering of Hecuba upon the knees of the statue of the goddess. How far, however, such statues could be called works of art, or how far they were wrought by native

* Pausanias, lib. i. c. 27, speaks of a wooden statue in the Temple of Polias, in Athens, said to have been the gift of Cecrops; and, with far more claim to belief, in the previous chapter he tells us that the most holy of all the images was a statue of Minerva, which, by the common consent of all the towns before incorporated in one city, was dedicated in the citadel, or Πολις. Tradition, therefore, carried the date of this statue beyond the time of Theseus. Plutarch also informs us that Theseus himself, when he ordained divine honours to be paid to Ariadne, ordered two little statues to be made of her—one of silver and one of brass.

Greeks, it is impossible to determine.* Certain it is that the memorable and gigantic advance in the art of SCULPTURE was not made till about the 50th Olympiad, (B.C. 580,) when Dipænus and Scyllis first obtained celebrity in works in marble, (wood and metals were the earliest materials of sculpture.) The great improvements in the art seem to have been coëval with the substitution of the naked for the draped figure. Beauty, and ease, and grace, and power, were the result of the anatomical study of the human form. ARCHITECTURE has bequeathed to us, in the Pelasgic and Cyclopean remains, sufficient to indicate the massive strength it early acquired in parts of Greece. In the Homeric times, the intercourse with Asia had already given something of lightness to the elder forms. Columns are constantly introduced into the palaces of the chiefs, profuse metallic ornaments decorate the walls; and the Homeric palaces, with their cornices gaily inwrought with blue—their pillars of silver on bases of brass, rising amidst vines and fruit-

* All that Homer calls the work of Vulcan, such as the dogs in the palace of Alcinous, &c., we may suppose to be the work of foreigners. A poet could scarcely attribute to the gods a work that his audience knew an artificer in their own city had made!

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trees,—even allowing for all the exaggerations of the poet,—dazzle the imagination with much of the gaudiness and glitter of an oriental city.* At this period Athens receives from Homer the epithet of 'broad-streeted;' and it is by no means improbable that the City of the Attic king might have presented to a traveller, in the time of Homer, a more pleasing general appearance than in its age of fame, when, after the Persian devastations, its stately temples rose above narrow and irregular streets, and the jealous effects of democracy forbade to the mansions of individual nobles, that striking pre-eminence over the houses of the commonalty which would naturally mark the distinction of wealth and rank, in a monarchical, or even an oligarchical, government.

XI. About the time on which we now enter, the extensive commerce and free institutions of the Ionian Colonies had carried all the arts just referred to far beyond the Homeric time. And in addition to the activity and developement of the intellect in all its faculties which progressed with the extensive trade and colonisation of Miletus, (operating upon the sensitive, inquiring, and poetical temperament of the Ionian population,) a singular event, which suddenly opened to Greece

* See Odyssey, book vii.

familiar intercourse with the arts and love of Egypt, gave considerable impetus to the whole Grecian MIND.

In our previous brief survey of the state of the Oriental world, we have seen that Egypt, having been rent into twelve principalities, had been again united under a single monarch. The ambitious and fortunate Psammetichus was enabled, by the swords of some Ionian and Carian adventurers, (who, bound on a voyage of plunder, had been driven upon the Egyptian shores,) not only to regain his own dominion, from which he had been expelled by the jealousy of his comrades, but to acquire the sole sovereignty of Egypt. In gratitude for their services, Psammetichus conferred upon his wild allies certain lands at the Pelusian mouth of the Nile, and obliged some Egyptian children to learn the Grecian language;—from these children descended a class of interpreters, that long afterwards established the facilities of familiar intercourse between Greece and Egypt. Whatever, before that time, might have been the migrations of Egyptians into Greece, these were the first Greeks whom the Egyptians received amongst themselves. Thence poured into Greece, in one full and continuous stream, the Egyptian influences, hitherto partial and unfrequent.* B.C. 670.

* The effect of the arts, habits, and manners, of a foreign

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In the same reign, according to Strabo, the Asiatic Greeks obtained a settlement at Naucratis, the ancient emporium of Egypt; and the communication, once begun, rapidly increased, until in the subsequent time of Amasis we find B.C. 569. the Ionians, the Dorians, the Æolians of Asia, and even the people of Ægina and Samos,* building temples and offering worship amidst the jealous and mystic priestcrafts of the Nile. This familiar and advantageous intercourse with a people whom the Greeks themselves considered the wisest on the earth, exercised speedy and powerful effect upon their religion and their arts:—In the first it operated immediately upon their modes of divination and their mystic rites —in the last, the influence was less direct. It is true, that they probably learnt from the Egyptians many technical rules in painting and in sculpture; they learnt how to cut the marble and to blend the colours, but their own genius

country, is immeasurably more important upon us if we visit that country, than if we merely receive visits from its natives. For example, the number of French emigrants who crowded our shores at the time of the French Revolution very slightly influenced English customs, &c. But the effect of the French upon us when, after the peace, our own countrymen flocked to France, was immense.

* Herod. lib. ii. c. 178.

taught them how to animate the block and vivify the image. We have seen already, that before this event, art had attained to a certain eminence among the Greeks—fortunately, therefore, what they now acquired was not the *foundation* of their lore. Grafted on a Grecian stock, every shoot bore Grecian fruit; and what was borrowed from mechanism, was re-produced in beauty.* As with the arts, so with the SCIENCES;

* Grecian architecture seems to have been more free from obligation to any technical secrets of Egyptian art than Grecian statuary or painting. For in the first place, it is more than doubtful whether the Doric order was not invented in European Greece long prior to the reign of Psammetichus;[1] and in the second place, it is evident that the first hints and rudiments both of the Doric and the Ionic order, were borrowed, not from buildings of the massive and perennial materials of Egyptian architecture, but from wooden edifices;—growing into perfection, as stone and marble were introduced, and the greater difficulty and expense of the workmanship insensibly imposed severer thought and more elaborate rules upon the architect. But I cannot agree with Müller and others, that because the first hints of the Doric order were taken from wooden buildings, therefore the first invention was necessarily with the Dorians, since many of the Asiatic cities were built chiefly of wood. It seems to

[1] The earliest known temple at Corinth is supposed by Col. Leake to bear date B.C. 800, about one hundred and thirty years before the reign of Psammetichus in Egypt.

—we have reason to doubt whether the Egyptian sages, whose minds were swathed and bandaged in the cerements of hereditary rules, never to swell out of the slavery of castes, had any very sound and enlightened philosophy to communicate: their wisdom was probably exaggerated by the lively and credulous Greeks, awed by the mysticism of the priests, the grandeur of the cities, the very rigidity, so novel to them, of imposing and antique custom. What, then, was the real benefit of the intercourse? Not so much in satisfying, as in arousing and stimulating, the curiosity of knowledge. Egypt to the Greeks, was as America to Europe—the Egyptians taught them little, but Egypt much. And that that which the Egyptians did directly communicate, was rather the material for improvement than the improvement itself, this one gift is an individual example and a general type;—the Egyptians imparted to the Greeks the use of the

me most probable that Asia gave the first notions of these beautiful forms, and that the Greeks carried them to perfection before the Asiatics, not only from their keen perception of the Graceful, but because they earlier made a general use of stone. We learn from Herodotus that the gorgeous Sardis was built chiefly of wood, at a time when the marble of Paros was a common material of the Grecian temples.

papyrus—the most easy and popular material for writing; we are thus indebted to Egypt for a contrivance that has done much to preserve to us—much, perhaps, to create for us—a Plato and an Aristotle; but for the thoughts of Aristotle and Plato we are indebted to Greece alone: —The material Egyptian—the manufacture Greek.

XI. The use of the papyrus had undoubtedly much effect upon the formation of prose composition in Greece, but it was by no means an instantaneous one. At the period on which we now enter, (about B.C. 600,) the first recorded prose Grecian writer had not composed his works. The wide interval between prose in its commencement, and poetry in its perfection, is peculiarly Grecian; many causes conspired to produce it, but the principal one was, that works, if written, being not the less composed to be recited, not read—were composed to interest and delight, rather than formally to instruct. Poetry was, therefore, so obviously the best means to secure the end of the author, that we cannot wonder to find that channel of appeal universally chosen; the facility with which the language formed itself into verse, and the licence that appears to have been granted to the gravest to assume a poetical diction without at-

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tempting the poetical spirit, allowed even legislators and moralists to promulgate precepts and sentences in the rhythm of a Homer and a Hesiod. And since laws were not written before the time of Draco, it was doubly necessary that they should be cast in that fashion by which words are most durably impressed on the memory of the multitude. Even on Solon's first appearance in public life, when he inspires the Athenians to prosecute the war with Megara, he addresses the passions of the crowd, not by an oration, but a poem ; and in a subsequent period, when prose composition had become familiar, it was still in verse that Hipparchus communicated his moral apothegms. The origin of prose in Greece is, therefore, doubly interesting as an epoch, not only in the intellectual, but also in the social state. It is clear that it would not commence until a *reading public* was created ; and until, amidst the poetical many, had sprung up the grave and studious few. Accordingly, philosophy orally delivered, preceded prose composition—and Thales taught before Pherecydes wrote.* To the superficial it may seem sur-

* Thales was one of the seven wise men, B.C. 586, when Pherecydes of Syrus the first prose writer was about fourteen years old. Mr. Clinton fixes the acmé of Pherecydes about B.C. 572. Cadmus, of Miletus, flourished B.C. 530.

prising that literature, as distinct from poetry, should commence with the most subtle and laborious direction of the human intellect: yet so it was, not only in Greece, but almost universally. In nearly all countries, speculative conjecture or inquiry is the first successor to poetry. In India, in China, in the East, some dim philosophy is the characteristic of the earliest works —sometimes inculcating maxims of morality— sometimes allegorically shadowing forth, sometimes even plainly expressing, the opinions of the author on the mysteries of Life—of Nature—of the Creation. Even with the moderns, the dawn of letters broke on the torpor of the dark ages of the North in speculative disquisition; the Arabian and the Aristotelian subtleties engaged the attention of the earliest cultivators of modern prose, (as separated from poetic fiction,) and the first instinct of the awakened Reason was to grope through the misty twilight after TRUTH. Philosophy precedes even history; men were desirous of solving the enigmas of the world, before they disentangled from tradition the chronicles of its former habitants.

If we examine the ways of an infant we shall cease to wonder at those of an infant civilisation. Long before we can engage the curiosity of the child in the History of England—long before we

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can induce him to listen with pleasure to our stories even of Poictiers and Cressy—and *(a fortiori)* long before he can be taught an interest in Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, he will of his own accord question us of the phenomena of Nature—inquire how he himself came into the world—delight to learn something of the God we tell him to adore—and find in the rainbow and the thunder, in the meteor and the star, a thousand subjects of eager curiosity and reverent wonder. The *why* perpetually torments him;—every child is born a philosopher!—the child is the analogy of a people yet in childhood.*

* To this solution of the question, why literature should generally commence with attempts at philosophy, may be added another:—When written first breaks upon oral communication, the *reading* public must necessarily be extremely confined. In many early nations, that reading public would be composed of the caste of priests; in this case philosophy would be cramped by superstition. In Greece, there being no caste of priests, philosophy embraced those studious minds addicted to a species of inquiry which rejected the poetical form, as well as the poetical spirit. It may be observed, that the more limited the reading public, the more abstruse are generally prose compositions; as readers increase, literature goes back to the fashion of oral communication; for if the reciter addressed the multitude in the earlier age, so the writer addresses a multitude in the later; literature, therefore, commences with poetical fiction, and usually ter-

XII. It may follow as a corollary from this problem, that the Greeks of themselves arrived at the stage of Philosophical Inquiry without any very important and direct assistance from the lore of Egypt and the East. That lore, indeed, awakened the desire, but it did not guide the spirit, of speculative research. And the main cause why philosophy at once assumed with the Greeks a character distinct from that of the Oriental world, I have already intimated,* in the absence of a segregated and privileged religious caste. Philosophy thus fell into the hands of sages, not of priests. And whatever the Ionian states (the cradle of Grecian wisdom) received from Egypt, or the East, they received to re-produce in new and luxuriant prodigality. The Ionian sages took from an elder wisdom not dogmas never to be questioned, but suggestions carefully to be examined. It thus fortunately happened that the deeper and maturer philosophy of Greece proper had a kind of intermedium between the systems of other nations and its own. The Eastern knowledge was borne to Europe through

minates with prose fiction. It was so in the ancient world—it will be so with England and France. The harvest of novels is, I fear, a sign of the approaching exhaustion of the soil.

* See chapter i.

the Greek channels of Asiatic colonies, and became Hellenized as it passed. Thus, what was a certainty in the East, became a proposition in Ionia, and ultimately a doubt at Athens. In Greece, indeed, as everywhere, religion was connected with the first researches of philosophy. From the fear of the gods, to question of the nature of the gods, is an easy transition. The abundance and variety of popular superstitions served but to stimulate curiosity as to their origin; and since in Egypt the sole philosophers were the priests, a Greek could scarcely converse with an Egyptian on the articles of his religion without discussing also the principles of his philosophy. Whatever opinions the Greek might then form and promulge, being sheltered beneath no jealous and prescriptive priestcraft, all had unfettered right to canvass and dispute them, till by little and little discussion ripened into science.

The distinction, in fine, between the Greeks and their contemporaries was this: if they were not the only people that philosophized, they were the only people that said whatever they pleased about philosophy. Their very plagiarism from the philosophy of other creeds was fortunate, inasmuch as it presented nothing hostile to the national superstition. Had they disputed about the nature of Jupiter, or the existence of

Apollo, they might have been persecuted, but they could start at once into disquisitions upon the eternity of matter, or the providence of a pervading mind.

XIV. This spirit of innovation and discussion, which made the characteristic of the Greeks, is noted by Diodorus. "Unlike the Chaldæans," he observes, "with whom philosophy is delivered from sire to son, and all other employment rejected by its cultivators, the Greeks come late to the science—take it up for a short time—desert it for more active means of subsistence—and the few who surrender themselves wholly to it practise for gain, innovate the most important doctrines, pay no reverence to those that went before, create new sects, establish new theorems, and, by perpetual contradictions, entail perpetual doubts." Those contradictions and those doubts made precisely the reason why the Greeks became the tutors of the world!

There is another characteristic of the Greeks indicated by this remark of Diodorus. Their early philosophers, *not* being exempted from other employments, were not the mere dreamers of the closet and the cell. They were active, practical, stirring men of the world. They were politicians and moralists as well as philosophers. The Practical pervaded the Ideal,

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and was, in fact, the salt that preserved it from decay. Thus legislation and science sprung simultaneously into life, and the age of Solon is the age of Thales.

XIV. Of the seven wise men (if we accept that number) who flourished about the same period, six were rulers and statesmen. They were eminent, not as physical, but as moral, philosophers; and their wisdom was in their maxims and apothegms. They resembled in much the wary and sagacious tyrants of Italy in the Middle Ages—masters of men's actions by becoming readers of their minds. Of these seven, Periander of Corinth and Cleobulus of Lindus, tyrants in their lives, and cruel in their actions, were, it is said, disowned by the remaining five.* But goodness is not the necessary consequence of intellect, and, despite their vices, these princes deserved the epithet of wise. Of Cleobulus we know less than of Periander, but both governed with prosperity, and died in old age. If we except Pisistratus, Periander was the greatest artist of all that able and profound fraternity, who, under the name of tyrants, concentered the energies of their several states,

Periander began to reign B.C. 625, died B.C. 585.

Cleobulus one of the seven wise men, fl. B.C. 586.

* Instead of Periander of Corinth, is (by Plato and therefore) more popularly, but less justly, ranked Myson of Chene.

and prepared the democracies by which they were succeeded. Periander's reputed maxims are at variance with his practice; they breathe a spirit of freedom and a love of virtue which may render us suspicious of their authenticity—the more so as they are also attributed to others. Nevertheless, the inconsistency would be natural, for reason makes our opinions, and circumstance shapes our actions. "A democracy is better than a tyranny," is an aphorism imputed to Periander: but when asked why he continued tyrant, he answered, "Because it is dangerous willingly to resist, or unwillingly to be deposed." His principles were republican, his position made him a tyrant. He is said to have fallen into extreme dejection in his old age; perhaps because his tastes and his intellect were at war with his life. Chilo, the Lacedæmonian ephor, is placed also amongst the seven. His maxims are singularly Dorian—they breathe reverence of the dead, and suspicion of the living. "Love," he said, (if we may take the authority of Aulus Gellius,) "as if you might hereafter hate, and hate as if you might hereafter love." Another favourite sentence of his was "to a surety loss is at hand."* A third, "we try gold by the touchstone. Gold is the

B.C. 586.

* Attributed also to Thales; Stob. Serm.

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touchstone of the mind." Bias, of Priene in Ionia, is quoted, in Herodotus, as the author of an advice to the Ionians to quit their country, and found a common city in Sardinia. He seems to have taken an active part in all civil affairs. His reputed maxims are plain and homely—the elementary principles of morals. Mitylene in Lesbos boasted the celebrated Pittacus. He rose to the tyranny of the government by the free voice of the people; enjoyed it ten years, and voluntarily resigned it, as having only borne the dignity while the state required the direction of a single leader. It was a maxim with him, for which he is reproved by Plato, "That to be good is hard." His favourite precept was "Know occasion:" and this he amplified in another, (if rightly attributed to him,) "To foresee and prevent dangers is the province of the wise—to direct them when they come, of the brave."

Pittacus began to govern B.C. 589, resigned 579; one of the wise men 586, died 569.

XVI. Of Solon, the greatest of the seven, I shall hereafter speak at length. I pass now to Thales;—the founder of Philosophy, in its scientific sense—the Speculative in contradistinction to the Moral:—Although an ardent republican, Thales alone, of the seven sages, appears to have led a private and studious life. He travelled into Crete, Asia, and at a later period into

Egypt. According to Laertius, Egypt taught him geometry. He is supposed to have derived his astrological notions from Phœnicia. But this he might easily have done without visiting the Phœnician states. Returning to Miletus, he obtained his title of Wise.* Much learning has been exhausted upon his doctrines to very little purpose. They were of small value, save as they led to the most valuable of all philosophies —that of experiment. They were not new probably even in Greece,† and of their utility the

Thales born B.C. 639, one of the wise men 586.

* Aristotle relates (Pol. lib. i.) a singular anecdote of the means whereby this philosopher acquired wealth. His skill in meteorology made him foresee that there would be one season an extraordinary crop of olives. He hired during the previous winter all the oil-presses in Chios and Miletus, employing his scanty fortune in advances to the several proprietors. When the approaching season showed the ripening crops, every man wished to provide olive presses as quickly as possible; and Thales, having them all, let them at a high price. His monopoly made his fortune, and he shewed to his friends, says Aristotle, that it was very easy for philosophers to be rich if they desire it, though such is not their principal desire;—philosophy does not find the same facilities now-a-days.

† Thus Homer is cited in proof of the progenital humidity,

"Ὠκεανὸς ὅσπερ γένεσις πάντας τετύκται;"

The Bryant race of speculators would attack us at once with "the spirit moving on the face of the waters." It was

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following brief sketch will enable the reader to judge for himself.

He maintained that water, or rather humidity, was the origin of all things, though he allowed mind or intellect (νοῦς) to be the impelling principle. And one of his arguments in favour of humidity, as rendered to us by Plutarch and Stobæus, is pretty nearly as follows :—"Because fire, even in the sun and the stars, is nourished by vapours proceeding from humidity,—and, therefore, the whole world consists of the same." Of the world, he supposed the whole to be animated by, and full of, the Divinity—its Creator—that in it was no vacuum—that matter was fluid and variable.*

He maintained the stars and sun to be earthly, and the moon of the same nature as the sun, but illumined by it. Somewhat more valuable would appear to have been his geometrical science, could we with accuracy attribute to Thales, many problems claimed also, and more probably, by Pythagoras, and later reasoners.

not an uncommon opinion in Greece that chaos was first water settling into slime, and then into earth; and there are good but not sufficient reasons to attribute a similar, and of course earlier, notion to the Phœnicians, and still more perhaps to the Indians.

* Plut. de Plac. Phil.

He is asserted to have measured the Pyramids by their shadows. He cultivated astronomy and astrology; and Laertius declares him to have been the first Greek that foretold eclipses. The yet higher distinction has been claimed for Thales of having introduced amongst his countrymen the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. But this sublime truth, though connected with no theory of future rewards and punishments, was received in Greece long before his time. Perhaps, however, as the expressions of Cicero indicate, Thales might be the first who attempted to give reasons for what was believed. His reasons were, nevertheless, sufficiently crude and puerile; and having declared it the property of the soul to move itself, and other things, he was forced to give a soul to the load-stone, because it moved iron!

These fantastic doctrines examined, and his geometrical or astronomical discoveries dubious, it may be asked, what did Thales effect for philosophy?—Chiefly this: he gave *reasons* for *opinions*—he aroused the dormant spirit of inquiry—he did for truths what the legislators of his age did for the people—left them active and stirring to free and vigorous competition. He took Wisdom out of despotism, and placed her in a republic—he was in harmony with the great

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principle of his age, which was investigation, and not tradition ; and thus he became the first example of that great truth—that to think freely is the first step to thinking well. It fortunately happened, too, that his moral theories, however inadequately argued upon, were noble and exalting. He contended for the providence of a God, as well as for the immortality of man. He asserted vice to be the most hateful, virtue the most profitable, of all things.* He waged war on that vulgar tenacity of life which is the enemy to all that is most spiritual and most enterprising in our natures, and maintained that between life and death there is no difference—the fitting deduction from a belief in the continuous existence of the soul.† His especial maxim was the celebrated precept, "Know thyself." His influence was vigorous and immediate. How far he created philosophy may be doubtful, but he created philosophers. From the prolific intelligence which his fame and researches called into being, sprang a new race of thoughts, which continued in unbroken succession until they begat descendants illustrious and immortal. Without the hardy errors of Thales, Socrates might have spent his life in spoiling marble, Plato might have been only a tenth

* Ap. Stob. Serm. † Laert.

rate poet, and Aristotle an intriguing pedagogue.

XVI. With this, I close my introductory chapters, and proceed from Dissertation into History;—pleased that our general survey of Greece should conclude with an acknowledgment of our obligations to the Ionian colonies. Soon, from the contemplation of those enchanting climes;—of the extended commerce, and the brilliant genius of the people;—the birth-place of the epic and the lyric muse, the first home of History, of Philosophy, of Art;—soon, from our survey of the rise and splendour of the Asiatic Ionians, we turn to the agony of their struggles—the catastrophe of their fall. Those wonderful children of Greece had something kindred with the precocious intellect that is often the hectic symptom of premature decline. Originating, advancing nearly all which the imagination or the reason can produce, while yet in that social youth which promised a long, and a yet more glorious existence—while even their great Parent herself had scarcely emerged from the long pupilage of nations they fell into the feebleness of age! Amidst the vital struggles, followed by the palsied and prostrate exhaustion, of her Ionian children, the majestic Athens suddenly arose

BOOK I. CHAP. VIII. from the obscurity of the Past, to an empire that can never perish until Heroism shall cease to warm, Poetry to delight, and Wisdom to instruct, the Future.

END OF BOOK I.

ATHENS:

ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK II.

FROM THE LEGISLATION OF SOLON TO THE BATTLE OF MARATHON, B. C. 594—490.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSPIRACY OF CYLON—LOSS OF SALAMIS—FIRST APPEARANCE OF SOLON—SUCCESS AGAINST THE MEGARIANS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SALAMIS—CIRRHÆAN WAR—EPIMENIDES—POLITICAL STATE OF ATHENS—CHARACTER OF SOLON—HIS LEGISLATION—GENERAL VIEW OF THE ATHENIAN CONSTITUTION.

I. THE first symptom in Athens of the political crisis which, as in other of the Grecian states, marked the transition of power from the oligarchic to the popular party, may be detected in the laws of Draco. Undue severity in the legislature is the ordinary proof of a general discontent: its success is rarely lasting enough to confirm a government—its failure, when confessed, invariably strengthens a people. Scarcely had these laws been enacted when a formidable conspiracy broke out against the reigning oligarchy.* B.C. 621. B.C. 620.

* According to Clinton's chronology, viz. one year after

BOOK II. CHAP. I.

It was during the archonship of Megacles, (a scion of the great Alcmæonic family, which boasted its descent from Nestor,) that the aristocracy was menaced by the ambition of an aristocrat.

Born of an ancient and powerful house, and possessed of considerable wealth, Cylon, the Athenian, conceived the design of seizing the citadel, and rendering himself master of the state. He had wedded the daughter of Theagenes, tyrant of Megara, and had raised himself into popular reputation several years before, by a victory in the Olympic Games. The Delphic oracle was supposed to have inspired him with the design; but it is at least equally probable that the oracle was consulted after the design had been conceived. The Divine Voice declared that Cylon should occupy the citadel on the greatest festival of Jupiter. By the event it does not appear, however, that he selected the proper occasion. Taking advantage of an

Cylon victor, B.C. 640.

the legislation of Draco. This emendation of dates formerly received, throws considerable light upon the causes of the conspiracy, which perhaps took its strength from the unpopularity and failure of Draco's laws. Following the very faulty chronology which pervades his whole work, Mr. Mitford makes the attempt of Cylon *precede* the legislation of Draco.

Olympic year, when many of the citizens were gone to the games, and assisted with troops by his father-in-law, he seized the citadel. Whatever might have been his hopes of popular support—and there is reason to believe that he in some measure calculated upon it—the time was evidently unripe for the convulsion, and the attempt was unskilfully planned. The Athenians, under Megacles and the other archons, took the alarm, and in a general body blockaded the citadel. But they grew weary of the length of the siege; many of them fell away, and the contest was abandoned to the archons, with full power to act according to their judgment. So supine in defence of the liberties of the state are a people who have not yet obtained liberty for themselves!

II. The conspirators were reduced by the failure of food and water. Cylon and his brother privately escaped. Of his adherents, some perished by famine, others betook themselves to the altars in the citadel, claiming, as suppliants, the right of sanctuary. The guards of the magistrates, seeing the suppliants about to expire from exhaustion, led them from the altar, and put them to death. But some of the number were not so scrupulously slaughtered—massacred around the altars of the Furies. The horror ex-

BOOK II. CHAP. I. cited by a sacrilege so atrocious, may easily be conceived by those remembering the humane and reverent superstition of the Greeks:—the indifference of the people to the contest was changed at once into detestation of the victors. A conspiracy, hitherto impotent, rose at once into power by the circumstances of its defeat. Megacles—his whole house—all who had assisted in the impiety, were stigmatized with the epithet of "execrable." The faction, or friends of Cylon, became popular from the odium of their enemies—the city was distracted by civil commotions—by superstitious apprehensions of the divine anger—and, as the excesses of one party are the aliment of the other, so the abhorrence of a sacrilege effaced the remembrance of a treason.

III. The petty state of Megara, which since the earlier ages, had, from the dependant of Athens, grown up to the dignity of her rival, taking advantage of the internal dissensions in the latter city, succeeded in wresting from the Athenian government the isle of Salamis. It was not, however, without bitter and repeated struggles that Athens at last submitted to the surrender of the isle. But, after signal losses and defeats, as nothing is ever more odious to the multitude than unsuccessful war, so the po-

pular feeling was such as to induce the government to enact a decree, by which it was forbidden, upon pain of death, to propose re-asserting the Athenian claims. But a law, evidently the offspring of a momentary passion of disgust or despair, and which could not but have been wrung with reluctance from a government, whose conduct it tacitly arraigned, and whose military pride it must have mortified, was not likely to bind, for any length of time, a gallant aristocracy and a susceptible people. Many of the younger portion of the community, pining at the dishonour of their country, and eager for enterprise, were secretly inclined to countenance any stratagem that might induce the reversal of the decree.

At this time, there went a report through the city, that a man of distinguished birth, indirectly descended from the last of the Athenian kings, had incurred the consecrating misfortune of insanity. Suddenly this person appeared in the market-place, wearing the peculiar badge that distinguished the sick.* His friends were, doubtless, well prepared for his appearance—a crowd, some predisposed to favour, others attracted by curiosity, were collected round him—and, ascending the stone from which the heralds made their proclamations, he began to recite

* A cap.

BOOK II. CHAP. I.

aloud a poem upon the loss of Salamis, boldly reproving the cowardice of the people, and inciting them again to war. His supposed insanity protected him from the law—his rank, reputation, and the circumstance of his being himself a native of Salamis, conspired to give to his exhortation a powerful effect, and the friends he had secured to back his attempt, loudly proclaimed their applauding sympathy with the spirit of the address. The name of the pretended madman was Solon, son of Execestides, the descendant of Codrus.

Plutarch (followed by Mr. Mitford, Mr. Thirlwall, and other modern historians) informs us that the celebrated Pisistratus then proceeded to exhort the assembly, and to advocate the renewal of the war—an account that is liable to this slight objection, that Pisistratus at that time was not born!*

* The expedition against Salamis under Solon preceded the arrival of Epimenides at Athens, which was in 596. The legislation of Solon was B. C. 594—the first tyranny of Pisistratus B. C. 560; viz. thirty-four years after Solon's legislation, and at least thirty-seven years after Solon's expedition to Salamis. But Pisistratus lived thirty-three years after his first usurpation, so that if he had acted in the first expedition to Salamis, he would have lived to an age little short of one hundred, and been considerably past eighty at the time of his third most brilliant and most

IV. The stratagem and the eloquence of Solon produced its natural effect upon his spirited and exciteable audience, and the public enthusiasm permitted the oligarchical government to propose and effect the repeal of the law.*

energetic government! The most probable date for the birth of Pisistratus is that assigned by Mr. Clinton, about B. C. 595, somewhat subsequent to Solon's expedition to Salamis, and only about a year prior to Solon's legislation. According to this date, Pisistratus would have been about sixty-eight at the time of his death. The error of Plutarch evidently arose from his confounding two wars with Megara for Salamis, attended with similar results—the first led by Solon, the second by Pisistratus. I am the more surprised that Mr. Thirlwall should have fallen into the error of making Pisistratus contemporary with Solon in this affair, because he would fix the date of the recovery of Salamis at B.C. 604, (see note to Thirlwall's Greece, p. 25, vol. ii.,) and would suppose Solon to be about thirty-two at that time, (viz. twenty-six years old in 612 B.C.) (See Thirlwall, vol. ii. p. 23, note.) Now, as Pisistratus could not have been well less than twenty-one, to have taken so prominent a share as that ascribed to him by Plutarch and his modern followers, in the expedition, he must, according to such hypothesis, have been only eleven years younger than Solon, have perpetrated his first tyranny just before Solon died of old age, and married a second wife when he was near eighty! Had this been the case, the relations of the lady could not reasonably have been angry that the marriage was not consummated!

* We cannot suppose, as the careless and confused Plutarch would imply, that the people, or popular assembly, re-

BOOK II. CHAP. I. An expedition was decreed and planned, and Solon was invested with its command. It was but a brief struggle to recover the little island of Salamis: with one galley of thirty oars and a number of fishing craft, Solon made for Salamis, took a vessel sent to reconnoitre by the Megarians, manned it with his own soldiers, who were ordered to return to the city with such caution as might prevent the Megarians discovering the exchange, on board, of foes for friends; and then with the rest of his force he engaged the enemy by land, while those in the ship captured the city. In conformity with this version of the campaign, (which I have selected in preference to another recorded by Plutarch,) an Athenian ship once a-year passed silently to Salamis—the inhabitants rushed clamouring down to meet it—an armed man leapt ashore, and ran shouting to the Promontory of Sciradium, near which was long existent

versed the decree; the government was not then democratic, but popular assemblies existed, which, in extraordinary cases —especially, perhaps, in the case of war—it was necessary to propitiate, and customary to appeal to. I make no doubt that it was with the countenance and consent of the archons that Solon made his address to the people, preparing them to *receive* the repeal of the decree, which without their approbation it might be unsafe to propose.

a temple erected and dedicated to Mars by Solon.

But the brave and resolute Megarians were not men to be disheartened by a single reverse; they persisted in the contest—losses were sustained on either side, and at length both states agreed to refer their several claims on the sovereignty of the island to the decision of Spartan arbiters. And this appeal from arms to arbitration is a proof how much throughout Greece had extended that spirit of civilisation which is but an extension of the sense of justice. Both parties sought to ground their claims upon ancient and traditional rights. Solon is said to have assisted the demand of his countrymen by a quotation, asserted to have been spuriously interpolated, from Homer's catalogue of the ships which appeared to imply the ancient connexion of Salamis and Athens;* and whether or not this was actually done, the very tradition that it was done, nearly half a century before the first usurpation of Pisistratus, is a proof of the great authority of Homer in that age, and how largely

* As the quotation from Homer is extremely equivocal, merely stating that Ajax joined the ships that he led from Salamis with those of the Athenians, one cannot but suppose, that if Solon had really taken the trouble to forge a verse, he would have had the common sense to forge one much more decidedly in favour of his argument.

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the services rendered by Pisistratus, many years afterwards, to the Homeric poems, have been exaggerated and misconstrued. The mode of burial in Salamis, agreeable to the custom of the Athenians and contrary to that of the Megarians, and reference to certain Delphic Oracles, in which the island was called 'Ionian,' were also adduced in support of the Athenian claims. The arbitration of the umpires in favour of Athens only suspended hostilities; and the Megarians did not cease to watch (and shortly afterwards they found) a fitting occasion to regain a settlement so tempting to their ambition.

V. The credit acquired by Solon in this expedition was shortly afterwards greatly increased in the estimation of Greece. In the Bay of Corinth was situated a town called Cirrha, inhabited by a fierce and lawless race, who, after devastating the sacred territories of Delphi, sacrilegiously besieged the city itself, in the desire to possess themselves of the treasures which the piety of Greece had accumulated in the Temple of Apollo. Solon appeared at the Amphictyonic council, represented the sacrilege of the Cirrhæans, and persuaded the Greeks to arm in defence of the altars of their tutelary God. Clisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon, was sent as commander-in-chief against the Cirrhæans; and

Cirrhæan war commences B. C. 595.

(according to Plutarch) the records of Delphi inform us that Alcmæon was the leader of the Athenians. The war was not very successful at the onset; the oracle of Apollo was consulted, and the answer makes one of the most amusing anecdotes of priestcraft. The besiegers were informed by the god that the place would not be reduced until the waves of the Cirrhæan Sea washed the territories of Delphi. The reply perplexed the army; but the superior sagacity of Solon was not slow in discovering that the holy intention of the oracle was to appropriate the lands of the Cirrhæans to the profit of the temple. He therefore advised the besiegers to attack and to conquer Cirrha, and to dedicate its whole territory to the service of the god. The advice was adopted—Cirrha was taken; it became thenceforth the arsenal of Delphi, and the insulted deity had the satisfaction of seeing the sacred lands washed by the waves of the Cirrhæan Sea. An oracle of this nature was perhaps more effectual than the sword of Clisthenes in preventing future assaults on the divine city! The Pythian games commenced, or were revived, in celebration of this victory of the Pythian god.

Cirrhæan war ended B.C. 586.

VI. Meanwhile at Athens—the tranquillity of the state was still disturbed by the mortal

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feud between the party of Cylon and the adherents of the Alcmæonidæ—time only served to exasperate the desire of vengeance in the one, and increase the indisposition to justice in the other. Fortunately, however, the affairs of the state were in that crisis which is ever favourable to the authority of an individual. There are periods in all constitutions when, amidst the excesses of factions, every one submits willingly to an arbiter. With the genius that might have made him the destroyer of the liberties of his country, Solon had the virtue to constitute himself their saviour. He persuaded the families stigmatized with the crime of sacrilege, and the epithet of 'execrable,' to submit to the forms of trial; they were impeached, judged, and condemned to exile; the bodies of those whom death had already summoned to a sterner tribunal were disinterred, and removed beyond the borders of Attica. Nevertheless, the superstitions of the people were unappeased. Strange appearances were beheld in the air, and the augurs declared that the entrails of the victims denoted that the gods yet demanded a fuller expiation of the national crime.

At this time there lived in Crete one of those remarkable men common to the early ages of

the world, who sought to unite with the honours of the sage the mysterious reputation of the magician. Epimenides, numbered by some among the seven wise men, was revered throughout Greece as one whom a heavenlier genius animated and inspired. Devoted to poetry, this crafty impostor carried its prerogatives of fiction into actual life; and when he declared—in one of his verses, quoted by St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus—that "the Cretans were great liars," we have no reason to exempt the venerable accuser from his own unpatriotic reproach. Among the various legends which attach to his memory is a tradition that has many a likeness both in northern and eastern fable:—he is said to have slept forty-seven* years in a cave, and on his waking from that moderate repose, to have been not unreasonably surprised to discover the features of the country perfectly changed. Returning to Cnossus, of which he was a citizen, strange faces everywhere present themselves. At his father's door he is asked his business, and at length, with considerable difficulty, he succeeds in making himself known to his younger brother, whom he had left a boy, and now recognized in an old decrepit man. "This story," says a philosophical biogra-

* Fifty-seven, according to Pliny.

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pher, very gravely, "made a considerable sensation"—an assertion not to be doubted; but those who were of a more sceptical disposition, imagined that Epimenides had spent the years of his reputed sleep in travelling over foreign countries, and thus acquiring from men those intellectual acquisitions which he more piously referred to the special inspiration of the gods. Epimenides did not scruple to preserve the mysterious reputation he obtained from this tale by fables equally audacious. He endeavoured to persuade the people that he was Æacus, and that he frequently visited the earth; he was supposed to be fed by the nymphs —was never seen to eat in public—he assumed the attributes of prophecy—and dying in extreme old age, was honoured by the Cretans as a god.

In addition to his other spiritual prerogatives, this reviler of 'liars' boasted the power of exorcism, was the first to introduce into Greece the custom of purifying public places and private abodes, and was deemed peculiarly successful in banishing those ominous phantoms which were so injurious to the tranquillity of the inhabitants of Athens. Such a man was exactly the person born to relieve the fears of the Athenians and accomplish the things dictated by the

panting entrails of the sacred victims. Accordingly, (just prior to the Cirrhæan war,) a ship was fitted out, in which an Athenian named Nicias was sent to Crete enjoined to bring back the purifying philosopher, with all that respectful state which his celebrity demanded. Epimenides complied with the prayer of the Athenians: he arrived at Athens, and completed the necessary expiation in a manner somewhat simple for so notable an exorcist. He ordered several sheep, some black and some white, to be turned loose in the Areopagus, directed them to be followed, and wherever they lay down, a sacrifice was ordained in honour of some one of the gods. 'Hence,' says the historian of the philosophers, 'you may still see throughout Athens anonymous altars (*i. e.* altars uninscribed to a particular god,) the memorials of that propitiation.'

B.C. 596.

The order was obeyed—the sacrifice performed—and the phantoms were seen no more. Although an impostor, Epimenides was a man of sagacity and genius. He restrained the excess of funereal lamentation, which often led to unseasonable interruptions of business, and conduced to fallacious impressions of morality; and in return he accustomed the Athenians to those regular habits of prayer and divine worship, which ever tend to regulate and sys-

BOOK II. CHAP. I. tematize the character of a people. He formed the closest intimacy with Solon, and many of the subsequent laws of the Athenian are said by Plutarch to have been suggested by the wisdom of the Cnossian sage. When the time arrived for the departure of Epimenides, the Athenians would have presented him with a talent in reward of his services, but the philosopher refused the offer; he besought the Athenians to affirm alliance with his countrymen; accepted of no other remuneration than a branch of the sacred olive which adorned the citadel, and was supposed the primæval gift of Minerva, and returned to his native city,—proving that a man in those days might be an impostor without seeking any other reward than the gratuitous honour of the profession.

VII. With the departure of Epimenides, his spells appear to have ceased; new disputes and new factions arose; and having no other crimes to expiate, the Athenians fell with one accord upon those of the government. Three parties—the Mountaineers, the Lowlanders, and the Coastmen—each advocating a different form of constitution, distracted the state by a common discontent with the constitution that existed,—the three parties, which, if we glance to the experience of modern times, we might almost believe

that no free state can ever be without—viz. the respective advocates of the oligarchic, the mixed, and the democratic government. The habits of life ever produce among classes the political principles by which they are severally regulated. The inhabitants of the mountainous district, free, rude, and hardy, were attached to a democracy; the possessors of the plains were the powerful families who inclined to an oligarchy, although, as in all aristocracies, many of them united, but with more moderate views, in the measures of the democratic party; and they who, living by the coast, were engaged in those commercial pursuits which at once produce an inclination to liberty, yet a fear of its excess, a jealousy of the insolence of the nobles, yet an apprehension of the licentiousness of the mob, arrayed themselves in favour of that mixed form of government—half oligarchic and half popular—which is usually the most acceptable to the middle classes of an enterprising people. But there was a still more fearful division than these, the three legitimate parties, now existing in Athens: a division, not of principle, but of feeling—that menacing division which, like the cracks in the soil, portending earthquake, as it gradually widens, is the symptom of convulsions that level and destroy,—the division, in one word, of the Rich

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and the Poor—the Havenots and the Haves. Under an oligarchy, that most griping and covetous of all forms of government, the inequality of fortunes had become intolerably grievous; so greatly were the poor in debt to the rich, that* they were obliged to pay the latter a sixth of the produce of the land, or else to engage their personal labour to their creditors, who might seize their persons in default of payment. Some were thus reduced to slavery, others sold to foreigners. Parents disposed of their children to clear their debts, and many, to avoid servitude, in stealth deserted the land. But a large body of the distressed, men more sturdy and united, resolved to resist the iron pressure of the law: they formed the design of abolishing debts—dividing the land—re-modelling the commonwealth; they looked around for a leader, and fixed their hopes on Solon. In the impatience of the poor, in the terror of the rich, liberty had lost its charms, and it was no uncommon nor partial hope that a monarchy might be founded on the ruins of an oligarchy already menaced with dissolution.

VIII. Solon acted during these disturbances with more than his usual sagacity, and there-

* Plut. in Vit. Sol.

fore, perhaps, with less than his usual energy. BOOK II.
He held himself backward and aloof, allowing CHAP. I.
either party to interpret, as it best pleased, ambiguous and oracular phrases, obnoxious to none, for he had the advantage of being rich without the odium of extortion, and popular without the degradation of poverty. "Phanias, the Lesbian," (so states the biographer of Solon,) "asserts that to save the state he intrigued with both parties, promising to the poor a division of the lands, to the rich a confirmation of their claims;" an assertion highly agreeable to the finesse and subtlety of his character. Appearing loth to take upon himself the administration of affairs, it was pressed upon him the more eagerly; and at length he was elected to the triple office of archon, arbitrator, and lawgiver; the destinies of Athens were unhesitatingly placed within his hands; all men hoped from him all things; opposing parties concurred in urging him to assume the supreme authority of king; oracles were quoted in his favour, and his friends asserted, that to want the ambition of a monarch was to fail in the proper courage of a man. Thus supported, thus encouraged, Solon B.C. 594.
proceeded to his august and immortal task of legislation.

IX. Let us here pause to examine, by such

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light as is bequeathed us, the character of Solon. Agreeably to the theory of his favourite maxim, which made moderation the essence of wisdom, he seems to have generally favoured, in politics, the middle party, and, in his own actions, to have been singular for that energy which is the equilibrium of indifference and of rashness. Elevated into supreme and unquestioned power—urged on all sides to pass from the office of the legislator to the dignity of the prince—his ambition never passed the line which his virtue dictated to his genius. "Tyranny," said Solon, "is a fair field, but it has no outlet." A subtle, as well as a noble, saying; it implies that he who has once made himself the master of the state has no option as to the means by which he must continue his power. Possessed of that fearful authority, his first object is to rule, and it becomes a secondary object to rule well. 'Tyranny has, indeed, no outlet!' The few, whom in modern times we have seen endowed with a similar spirit of self-control, have attracted our admiration by their honesty rather than their intellect; and the sceptic in human virtue has ascribed the purity of Washington as much to the mediocrity of his genius as to the sincerity of his patriotism:—the coarseness of vulgar ambi-

tion can sympathize but little with those who refuse a throne. But in Solon there is no disparity between the Mental and the Moral, nor can we account for the moderation of his views by affecting doubt of the extent of his powers. His natural genius was versatile and luxuriant. As an orator, he was the first, according to Cicero, who originated the logical and brilliant rhetoric which afterwards distinguished the Athenians. As a poet, we have the assurance of Plato that, could he have devoted himself solely to the art, even Homer would not have excelled him. And though these panegyrics of later writers are to be received with considerable qualification—though we may feel assured that Solon could never have been either a Demosthenes or a Homer—yet we have sufficient evidence in his history to prove him to have been eloquent—sufficient in the few remains of his verses to attest poetical talent of no ordinary standard. As a soldier, he seems to have been a dexterous master of the tactics of that primitive day in which military science consisted chiefly in the stratagems of a ready wit and a bold invention. As a negociator, the success with which, out of elements so jarring and distracted, he created an harmonious system of society and law, is an unanswerable evidence not more of the soundness of

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his theories than of his practical knowledge of mankind. The sayings imputed to him which can be most reasonably considered authentic, evince much delicacy of observation. Whatever his ideal of good government, he knew well that great secret of statesmanship, never to carry speculative doctrines too far beyond the reach of the age to which they are to be applied. Asked if he had given the Athenians the best of laws, his answer was, "The best laws they are capable of receiving." His legislation, therefore, was no vague collection of inapplicable principles. While it has been the origin of all subsequent law,—while, adopted by the Romans, it makes at this day the universal spirit which animates the codes and constitutions of Europe—it was moulded to the habits, the manners, and the condition of the people whom it was intended to enlighten, to harmonize, and to guide. He was no gloomy ascetic, such as a false philosophy produces, affecting the barren sublimity of an indolent seclusion; open of access to all, free and frank of demeanor, he found wisdom as much in the market-place as the cell. He aped no coxcombical contempt of pleasure, no fanatical disdain of wealth; hospitable, and even sumptuous, in his habits of life, he seemed desirous of proving that truly to be wise is honestly

to enjoy. The fragments of his verses which have come down to us are chiefly egotistical: they refer to his own private sentiments, or public views, and inform us with a noble pride, 'that if reproached with his lack of ambition, he finds a kingdom in the consciousness of his unsullied name.' With all these qualities, he apparently united much of that craft and spirit of artifice which, according to all history, sacred as well as profane, it was not deemed sinful in patriarch or philosopher to indulge. Where he could not win his object by reason, he could stoop to attain it by the affectation of madness. And this quality of craft was necessary perhaps, in that age, to accomplish the full utilities of his career. However he might feign or dissimulate, the end before him was invariably excellent and patriotic; and the purity of his private morals harmonized with that of his political ambition. What Socrates was to the philosophy of reflection, Solon was to the philosophy of action.

X. The first law that Solon enacted in his new capacity was bold and decisive. No revolution can ever satisfy a people if it does not lessen their burthens. Poverty disposes men to innovation only because innovation promises relief. Solon therefore applied him-

BOOK II. CHAP. I.

self resolutely, and at once, to the great source of dissension between the rich and the poor—namely, the enormous accumulation of debt which had been incurred by the latter, with slavery, the penalty of default. He induced the creditors to accept the compromise of their debts: whether absolutely cancelling the amount, or merely reducing the interest and debasing the coin, is a matter of some dispute; the greater number of authorities incline to the former supposition, and Plutarch quotes the words of Solon himself in proof of the bolder hypothesis, although they by no means warrant such an interpretation. And to remove for ever the renewal of the greatest grievance in connexion with the past distresses, he enacted a law that no man hereafter could sell himself in slavery for the discharge of a debt. Even such as were already enslaved were emancipated, and those sold by their creditors into foreign countries were ransomed, and restored to their native land. But, though (from the necessity of the times) Solon went to this desperate extent of remedy, comparable in our age only to the formal sanction of a national bankruptcy, he rejected with firmness the wild desire of a division of lands. There may be abuses in the contraction of debts which require

far sterner alteratives than the inequalities of property. He contented himself in respect to the latter with a law which set a limit to the purchase of land—a theory of legislation not sufficiently to be praised, if it were possible to enforce it.* At first, these measures fell short of the popular expectation, excited by the example of Sparta into the hope of an equality of fortunes; but the reaction soon came. A public sacrifice was offered in honour of the discharge of debt, and the authority of the lawgiver was corroborated and enlarged. Solon was not one of those politicians who vibrate alternately between the popular and the aristocratic principles, imagining that the concession of to-day ought necessarily to father the denial of to-morrow. He knew mankind too deeply not to be aware that there is no statesman whom the populace suspect like the one who commences authority with a bold reform, only to continue it with hesitating expedients. His very next measure was more vigorous and more unexceptionable than the first. The evil of the laws of Draco was not that they were severe, but that they were inefficient. In legislation, characters of blood are always traced upon

* Arist. Pol. lib. ii. c. 8.

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tablets of sand. With one stroke Solon annihilated the whole of these laws, with the exception of that (an ancient and acknowledged ordinance) which related to homicide; he affixed, in exchange, to various crimes—to theft, to rape, to slander, to adultery—punishments proportioned to the offence. It is remarkable that in the spirit of his laws he appealed greatly to the sense of honour and the fear of shame, and made it one of his severest penalties to be styled ἄτιμος or unhonoured—a theory, that while it suited the existent, went far to ennoble the future, character of the Athenians. In the same spirit the children of those who perished in war were educated at the public charge—arriving at maturity, they were presented with a suit of armour, settled in their respective callings, and honoured with principal seats in all public assemblies. That is a wise principle of a state which makes us grateful to its pensioners, and bids us regard in those supported at the public charge the reverent memorials of the public service.* Solon had the magnanimity to

* This regulation is probably of later date than the time of Solon. To Pisistratus is referred a law for disabled citizens, though its suggestion is ascribed to Solon. It was, however, a law that evidently grew out of the principles of Solon.

preclude, by his own hand, a dangerous temptation to his own ambition, and assigned death to the man who aspired to the sole dominion of the commonwealth. He put a check to the jobbing interests and importunate canvass of individuals, by allowing no one to propose a law in favour of a single person, unless he had obtained the votes of six thousand citizens; and he secured the quiet of a city exposed to the licence of powerful factions, by forbidding men to appear armed in the streets, unless in cases of imminent exigence.

XI. The most memorable of Solon's sayings illustrates the theory of the social fabric he erected. When asked how injustice should be banished from a commonwealth? he answered, "by making *all* men interested in the injustice done to *each*;"—an answer embodying the whole soul of liberty. His innovations in the mere forms of the ancient constitution do not appear to have been considerable; he rather added than destroyed. Thus he maintained or revived the senate of the aristocracy; but to check its authority he created a People. The four ancient tribes,* long subdivided into minor sections, were

* A tribe contained three phratries, or fraternities—a phratry contained three genea or clans—a genos or clan was composed of thirty heads of families. As the population,

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retained. Foreigners, who had transported for a permanence their property and families to Athens, and abandoned all connexion with their own countries, were admitted to swell the numbers of the free population. This made the constituent body. At the age of eighteen, each citizen was liable to military duties within the limits of Attica: at the age of twenty he attained his majority, and became entitled to a vote in the popular assembly, and to all the other

both in the aggregate and in these divisions, must have been exposed to constant fluctuations, the aforesaid numbers were most probably what we may describe as a fiction in law, as Boeckh (Pol. Econ. of Athens, vol. i. p. 47, English translation,) observes, "in the same manner that the Romans called the captain a centurion, even if he commanded sixty men, so a family might have been called a τριακάς, (*i. e.* a *thirtiad*,) although it contained fifty or more persons." It has been conjectured indeed by some, that from a class not included in these families, vacancies in the phratries were filled up; but this seems to be a less probable supposition than that which I have stated above. If the numbers in Pollux were taken from a census in the time of Solon, the four tribes at that time contained three hundred and sixty families, each family consisting of thirty persons; this would give a total population of ten thousand eight hundred free citizens. It was not long before that population nearly doubled itself, but the titles of the subdivisions remained the same. I reserve for an appendix a more detailed and critical view of the vehement but tedious disputes of the learned on the complicated subject of the Athenian tribes and families.

rights of citizenship. Every free Athenian of the age of twenty was thus admitted to a vote in the legislature. But the possession of a very considerable estate was necessary to the attainment of the higher offices. Thus, while the people exercised universal suffrage in voting, the choice of candidates was still confined to an oligarchy. Four distinct ranks were acknowledged; not according, as hitherto, to hereditary descent, but the possession of property. They whose income yielded five hundred measures in any commodity, dry or liquid, were placed in the first rank, under the title of Pentacosiomedimnians. The second class, termed Hippeis, knights or horsemen, was composed of those whose estates yielded three hundred measures. Each man belonging to it was obliged to keep a horse for the public service, and to enlist himself, if called upon, in the cavalry of the military forces; (the members of either of these higher classes were exempt, however, from serving on board ship, or in the infantry, unless entrusted with some command.) The third class was composed of those possessing two hundred* mea-

* Boeckh (Pub. Econ. of Athens, book iv. chap. v.) contends, from a law preserved by Demosthenes, that the number of measures for the zeugitæ was only one hundred and fifty.

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sures, and called Zeugitæ; and the fourth and most numerous class comprehended, under the name of Thetes, the bulk of the non-inslaved working population, whose property fell short of the qualification required for the Zeugitæ. Glancing over these divisions, we are struck by their similarity to the ranks amongst our own northern and feudal ancestry, corresponding to the nobles, the knights, the burgesses, and the labouring classes, which have so long made, and still constitute, the demarcations of society in modern Europe. The members of the first class were alone eligible to the highest offices as archons, those of the three first classes to the political assembly of the Four Hundred, (which I shall presently describe,) and to some minor magistracies; the members of the fourth class were excluded from all office, unless, as they voted in the popular assembly, they may be said to have had a share in the legislature, and

But his argument, derived from the analogy of the sum to be given to an heiress by her nearest relation, if he refused to marry her, is by no means convincing enough to induce us to reject the proportion of two hundred measures, "preserved (as Boeckh confesses) by all writers," especially as in the time of Demosthenes, Boeckh himself, in a subsequent passage, rightly observes, that the names of zeugitæ, &c. could only apply to new classes introduced in the place of those instituted by Solon.

to exercise, in extraordinary causes, judicial authority. At the same time no hereditary barrier excluded them from the hopes so dear to human aspirations. They had only to acquire the necessary fortune in order to enjoy the privilege of their superiors. And, accordingly, we find, by an inscription on the Acropolis, recorded in Pollux, that Anthemion, of the lowest class, was suddenly raised to the rank of knight.*

XII. We perceive from these divisions of rank, that the main principle of Solon's constitution was founded, not upon birth, but wealth. He instituted what was called a *timocracy*, viz. an aristocracy of property; based upon democratic institutions of popular jurisdiction, election, and appeal. Conformably to the principle which pervades all states that make property the qualification for office, to property the general taxation was apportioned: And this, upon a graduated scale, severe to the first class, and completely exonerating the lowest. The ranks of the citizens thus established, the constitution acknowledged three great councils or branches of legislature. The first was that of the venerable Areopagus. We have already seen that this institution had

* With respect to the value of "a measure" in that time, it was estimated at a drachma, and a drachma was the price of a sheep.

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long existed amongst the Athenians; but of late it had fallen into some obscurity or neglect, and was not even referred to in the laws of Draco. Solon continued the name of the assembly, but remodelled its constitution. Anciently it had probably embraced all the Eupatrids. Solon defined the claims of the aspirants to that official dignity, and ordained that no one should be admitted to the areopagus who had not filled the situation of archon—an ordeal which implied not only the necessity of the highest rank, but, as I shall presently note, of sober character and unblemished integrity.

The remotest traditions clothed the very name of this assembly with majesty and awe. Holding their council on the sacred hill consecrated to Mars, fable asserted that the God of battle had himself been arraigned before its tribunal. Solon exerted his imagination to sustain the grandeur of its associations. Every distinction was lavished upon senators who, in the spirit of his laws, could only pass from the temple of Virtue to that of Honour. Before their jurisdiction all species of crime might be arraigned—they had equal power to reward and to punish. From the guilt of murder to the negative offence of idleness,* their control extended—the

* The law against idleness is attributable rather to Pisistratus than Solon.

consecration of altars to new deities, the penalties affixed to impiety, were at their decision, and in their charge. Theirs was the illimitable authority to scrutinize the lives of men—they attended public meetings and solemn sacrifices, to preserve order by the majesty of their presence. The custody of the laws and the management of the public funds, the superintendence of the education of youth, were committed to their care. Despite their power, they interfered but little in the management of political affairs, save in cases of imminent danger. Their duties, grave, tranquil, and solemn, held them aloof from the stir of temporary agitation. They were the last great refuge of the state, to which on common occasions it was almost profanity to appeal. Their very demeanor was modelled to harmonize with the reputation of their virtues, and the dignity of their office. It was forbidden to laugh in their assembly—no archon who had been seen in a public tavern could be admitted to their order,* and for an areopagite to compose a comedy was a matter of special prohibition.† They sate in the open air, in

* Athenæus, lib. xiv.

† Plutarch de Gloriâ Athen. I do not in this sketch entirely confine myself to Solon's regulations respecting the areopagus.

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common with all courts having cognizance of murder. If the business before them was great and various, they were wont to divide themselves into committees, to each of which the several causes were assigned by lot, so that no man knowing the cause he was to adjudge could be assailed with the imputation of dishonest or partial prepossession. After duly hearing both parties, they gave their judgment with proverbial gravity and silence. The institution of the ballot (a subsequent custom) afforded secrecy to their award—a proceeding necessary amidst the jealousy and power of factions, to preserve their judgment unbiassed by personal fear, and the abolition of which we shall see hereafter was among the causes that crushed for awhile the liberties of Athens. A brazen urn received the suffrages of condemnation—one of wood those of acquittal. Such was the character and constitution of the AREOPAGUS.*

XIII. The second legislative council ordained

* The number of the areopagites depending upon the number of the archons, was necessarily fluctuating and uncertain. An archon was not necessarily admitted to the areopagus. He previously underwent a rigorous and severe examination of the manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office, and was liable to expulsion upon proofs of immorality or unworthiness.

or revived by Solon, consisted of a Senate composed, first of four hundred, and many years afterwards of five hundred, members. To this council all, save the lowest and most numerous class, were eligible, provided they had passed, or attained, the age of thirty. It was rather a chance assembly than a representative one. The manner of its election appears not more elaborate than clumsy. To every ward there was a president, called Phylarchus. This magistrate on a certain day in the year gave in the names of all the persons within his district entitled to the honour of serving in the council, and desirous of enjoying it. These names were inscribed on brazen tablets, and cast into a certain vessel. In another vessel was placed an equal number of beans; supposing the number of candidates to be returned by each tribe to be (as it at first was) a hundred, there were one hundred white beans put into the vessel—the rest were black. Then the names of the candidates and the beans were drawn out one by one; and each candidate who had the good fortune to have his name drawn out together with a white bean, became a member of the senate. Thus the constitution of each succeeding senate might differ from the last—might, so far from representing the people,

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contradict their wishes—was utterly a matter of hazard and chance; and when Mr. Mitford informs us that the Assembly of the People was the great foundation of evil in the Athenian constitution, it appears that to the capricious and unsatisfactory election of this council we may safely impute many of the inconsistencies and changes which that historian attributes entirely to the more popular assembly.* To this council were entrusted powers less extensive in theory than those of the Areopagus, but far more actively exerted. Its members inspected the fleet (when a fleet was afterwards established)—they appointed jailors of prisons—they examined the accounts of magistrates at the termination of their office; these were minor duties;—to them was allotted also an authority in other departments, of a much higher and more complicated nature. To them was given the dark and fearful extent of power which enabled them to examine and to punish persons accused of offences unspecified by any pecu-

* Some modern writers have contended, that at the time of Solon the members of the council were not chosen by lot: their arguments are not to me very satisfactory. But if merely a delegation of the Eupatrids, as such writers suppose, the council would be still more vicious in its constitution.

liar law*—an ordinance than which, had less attention been paid to popular control, the wildest ambition of despotism would have required no broader base for its designs. A power to punish crimes unspecified by law is a power above law, and ignorance or corruption may easily distort innocence itself into crime. But the main duty of the Four Hundred was to prepare the laws to be submitted to the Assembly of the People—the great popular tribunal which we are about presently to consider. Nor could any law, according to Solon, be introduced into that assembly until it had undergone the deliberation, and received the sanction, of this preliminary council. With them, therefore, was THE ORIGIN OF ALL LEGISLATION. In proportion to these discretionary powers was the examination the members of the council underwent. Previous to the admission of any candidate, his life, his character, and his actions, were submitted to a vigorous scrutiny.† The senators then took a solemn oath, that they would endeavour to promote the public good, and the highest punishment they were allowed to inflict was a penalty of five hundred drachmæ. If that punishment were

* Pollux.

† Æschines in Timarch.

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The members of each tribe presided in turn over the rest,† under the name of Prytanes. It was the duty of the prytanes to assemble the senate, which was usually every day, and to keep order in the great assembly of the people. These were again subdivided into the Proedri, who presided weekly over the rest, while one of this number, appointed by lot, was the chief president, (or Epistates,) of the whole council; to him were intrusted the keys of the citadel and the treasury, and a wholesome jealousy of this

* Each member was paid (as in England once, as in America at this day) a moderate sum (one drachma) for his maintenance, and at the termination of his trust, peculiar integrity was rewarded with money from the public treasury.

† When there were ten tribes, each tribe presided thirty-five days, or five weeks; when the number was afterwards increased to twelve, the period of the presidency was one month.

two-fold trust limited its exercise to a single day. Each member gave notice in writing of any motion he intended to make—the prytanes had the prior right to propound the question, and afterwards it became matter of open discussion—they decided by ballot whether to reject or adopt it; if accepted, it was then submitted to the Assembly of the People, who ratified or refused the law which they might not originate.

Such was the constitution of the Athenian Council, one resembling in many points to the common features of all modern legislative assemblies.

XIV. At the Great Assembly of the People, to which we now arrive, all freemen of the age of discretion, save only those branded by law with the opprobrium of atimos, (unhonoured,*) were admissible. At the time of Solon, this assembly was by no means of the importance to which it afterwards arose. Its meetings were comparatively rare, and no

* Atimos means rather unhonoured than dishonoured. He to whom, in its milder degree, the word was applied, was rather withdrawn (as it were) from honour, than branded with disgrace. By rapid degrees, however, the word ceased to convey it original meaning; it was applied to offences so ordinary and common, that it sunk into a mere legal term.

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doubt it seldom rejected the propositions of the Four Hundred. But whenever different legislative assemblies exist, and popular control is once constitutionally acknowledged, it is in the nature of things that the more democratic assembly should absorb the main business of the more aristocratic. A people are often enslaved by the accident of a despot, but almost ever gain upon the checks which the constitution is intended habitually to oppose. In the later time, the assembly met four times in five weeks, (at least, during the period in which the tribes were ten in number,) that is, during the presidence of each prytanea. The first time of their meeting they heard matters of general import, approved or rejected magistrates, listened to accusations of grave political offences,* as well as the particulars of any confiscation of goods. The second time was appropriated to affairs relative as well to individuals as the community; and it was lawful for every man either to present a petition or share in a debate. The third time of meeting was devoted to the state audience of ambassadors. The fourth, to matters of religious worship or priestly ceremonial. These

* The more heinous of the triple offences, termed εισαγγελια.

four periodical meetings, under the name of Curia, made the common assembly, requiring no special summons, and betokening no extraordinary emergency. But besides these regular meetings, upon occasions of unusual danger, or in cases requiring immediate discussion, the assembly of the people might also be convened by formal proclamation; and in this case it was termed 'Sugkletos,' which we may render by the word *convocation*. The prytanes, previous to the meeting of the assembly, always placarded in some public place a programme of the matters on which the people were to consult. The persons presiding over the meeting were proedri, chosen by lot from the nine tribes, excluded at the time being from the office of prytanes; out of their number a chief-president (or epistates) was elected also by lot. Every effort was made to compel a numerous attendance, and each man attending received a small coin for his trouble,* a practice fruitful in jests to the comedians. The prytanes might forbid a man of notoriously bad character to speak. The chief president gave the signal for their decision. In ordinary cases they held

* This was a subsequent law; an obolus, or one penny farthing, was the first payment; it was afterwards increased to three oboli, or three-pence three-farthings.

up their hands, voting openly; but at a later period, in cases where intimidation was possible, such as in the offences of men of power and authority, they voted in secret. They met usually in the vast arena of their market-place.*

XV. Recapitulating the heads of that complex constitution I have thus detailed, the reader will perceive that the legislative power rested in three assemblies—the Areopagus, the Council, and the Assembly of the People—that the first, notwithstanding its solemn dignity and vast authority, seldom interfered in the active, popular, and daily politics of the state—that the second originated laws, which the third was the great Court of Appeal to sanction or reject. The great improvement of modern times has been to consolidate the two latter courts in one, and to unite in a representative senate the sagacity of a deliberative council with the interests of a popular assembly;—the more closely we blend these objects, the more perfectly, perhaps, we attain, by the means of wisdom, the ends of liberty.

* Sometimes, also, the assembly was held in the Pnyx, afterwards so celebrated; latterly, also, (especially in bad weather,) in the Temple of Bacchus;—on extraordinary occasions, in whatever place was deemed most convenient or capacious.

XVI. But although in a senate composed by the determinations of chance, and an assembly which from its numbers must ever have been exposed to the agitation of eloquence and the caprices of passion, there was inevitably a crude and imperfect principle,—although two courts containing in themselves the soul and element of contradiction necessarily wanted that concentrated oneness of purpose propitious to the regular and majestic calmness of legislation, we cannot but allow the main theory of the system to have been precisely that most favourable to the prodigal exuberance of energy, of intellect, and of genius. Summoned to consultation upon all matters, from the greatest to the least, the most venerable to the most trite—to-day deciding on the number of their war-ships, to-morrow on that of a tragic chorus; now examining with jealous forethought the new barriers to oligarchical ambition;—now appointing, with nice distinction, to various service the various combinations of music;*—now welcoming in their forum-senate the sober ambassadors of Lacedæmon or the jewelled heralds of Persia, now voting their sanction to new temples or the reverent reforms of worship; compelled to a lively and unceasing interest in all that arouses the mind, or elevates the passions,

* Plato de Legibus.

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or refines the taste ;—supreme arbiters of the art of the sculptor, as the science of the lawgiver,—judges and rewarders of the limner and the poet, as of the successful negociator or the prosperous soldier ;—we see at once the all-accomplished, all-versatile genius of the nation, and we behold in the same glance the effect and the cause :—every thing being referred to the people, the people learned of every thing to judge. Their genius was artificially forced, and in each of its capacities. They had no need of formal education. Their whole life was one school. The very faults of their assembly, in its proneness to be seduced by extraordinary eloquence, aroused the emulation of the orator, and kept constantly awake the imagination of the audience. An Athenian was, by the necessity of birth, what Milton dreamt that man could only become by the labours of completest education : in peace a legislator, in war a soldier,—in all times, on all occasions, acute to judge, and resolute to act. All that can inspire the thought or delight the leisure were for the people. Theirs were the portico and the school—theirs the theatre, the gardens, and the baths ; they were not, as in Sparta, the tools of the state—they *were* the state ! Lycurgus made machines and Solon men. In Sparta the machine was to be wound

up by the tyranny of a fixed principle; it could not dine as it pleased—it could not walk as it pleased—it was not permitted to seek its she machine save by stealth and in the dark; its children were not its own—even itself had no property in self. Sparta incorporated, under the name of freedom, the worst complexities, the most grievous and the most frivolous vexations, of slavery. And therefore was it that Lacedæmon flourished and decayed, bequeathing to fame men only noted for hardy valour, fanatical patriotism, and profound but dishonourable craft—attracting, indeed, the wonder of the world, but advancing no claim to its gratitude, and contributing no single addition to its intellectual stores. But in Athens the true blessing of freedom was rightly placed—in the opinions and the soul. Thought was the common heritage which every man might cultivate at his will. This unshackled liberty had its convulsions and its excesses, but producing unceasing emulation and unbounded competition, an incentive to every effort, a tribunal to every claim, it broke into philosophy with the one—into poetry with the other—into the energy and splendour of unexampled intelligence with all. Looking round us at this hour, more than four-and-twenty centuries after the establishment of the constitution we have

just surveyed,—in the labours of the student—in the dreams of the poet—in the aspirations of the artist—in the philosophy of the legislator—we yet behold the imperishable blessings we derive from the liberties of Athens and the institutions of Solon. The life of Athens became extinct, but her soul transfused itself, immortal and immortalizing, through the world.

XVII. The Penal Code of Solon was founded on principles wholly opposite to those of Draco. The scale of punishment was moderate, though sufficiently severe. One distinction will suffice to give us an adequate notion of its gradations. Theft by day was not a capital offence, but if perpetrated by night the felon might lawfully be slain by the owner. The tendency to lean to the side of mercy in all cases may be perceived from this—that if the suffrages of the judges were evenly divided, it was the custom in all the courts of Athens to acquit the accused. The punishment of death was rare; that of atimia, supplied its place. Of the different degrees of atimia it is not my purpose to speak at present. By one degree, however, the offender was merely suspended from some privilege of freedom enjoyed by the citizens generally, or condemned to a pecuniary fine; the second degree allowed the confiscation of goods; the third for ever

deprived the criminal and his posterity of the rights of a citizen: this last was the award only of aggravated offences. Perpetual exile was a sentence never passed but upon state criminals. The infliction of fines, which became productive of great abuse in later times, was moderately apportioned to offences in the time of Solon, partly from the high price of money, but partly, also, from the wise moderation of the lawgiver. The last grave penalty of death was of various kinds, as the cross, the gibbet, the precipice, the bowl—afflictions seldom in reserve for the freemen.

As the principle of shame was a main instrument of the penal code of the Athenians, so they endeavoured to attain the same object by the sublimer motive of honour. Upon the even balance of rewards that stimulate, and penalties that deter, Solon and his earlier successors conceived the virtue of the commonwealth to rest. A crown presented by the senate or the people—a public banquet in the hall of state—the erection of a statue in the thoroughfares (long a most rare distinction)—the privilege of precedence in the theatre or assembly—were honours constantly before the eyes of the young and the hopes of the ambitious. The sentiment of honour thus became a guiding principle of the legisla-

tion, and a large component of the character of the Athenians.

XVIII. Judicial proceedings, whether as instituted by Solon, or as corrupted by his successors, were exposed to some grave and vital evils hereafter to be noticed. At present I content myself with observing, that Solon carried into the judicial, the principles of his legislative, courts. It was his theory, that all the citizens should be trained to take an interest in the state. Every year a body of six thousand citizens was chosen by lot; no qualification save that of being thirty years of age was demanded in this election. The body thus chosen, called Heliæa, was subdivided into smaller courts, before which all offences, but especially political ones, might be tried. Ordinary cases were probably left by Solon to the ordinary magistrates; but it was not long before the popular jurors drew to themselves the final trial and judgment of all causes. This judicial power was even greater than the legislative; for if an act had passed through all the legislative forms, and was, within a year of the date, found inconsistent with the constitution or public interests, the popular courts could repeal the act and punish its author. In Athens there were no professional lawyers; the law being supposed

the common interest of citizens, every encouragement was given to the prosecutor—every facility to the obtaining of justice.

Solon appears to have recognised the sound principle, that the strength of law is in the public disposition to cherish and revere it,—and that nothing is more calculated to make permanent the general spirit of a constitution, than to render its details flexile and open to reform. Accordingly, he subjected his laws to the vigilance of regular and constant revision. Once a year, proposals for altering any existent law might be made by any citizen—were debated—and if approved, referred to a legislative committee, drawn by lot from the jurors. The committee then sat in judgment on the law; five advocates were appointed to plead for the old law; if unsuccessful, the new law came at once into operation. In addition to this precaution, six of the nine archons, (called Thesmothetæ,) whose office rendered them experienced in the defects of the law, were authorized to review the whole code, and to refer to the legislative committee the consideration of any errors or inconsistencies that might require amendment.*

* Plutarch assures us that Solon issued a decree that his laws were to remain in force a hundred years: an asser-

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XIX. With respect to the education of youth, the wise Athenian did not proceed upon the principles which in Sparta attempted to transfer to the state the dearest privileges of a parent. From the age of sixteen to eighteen, (and earlier in the case of orphans,) the law, indeed, seems to have considered that the State had a right to prepare its citizens for its service; and the youth was obliged to attend public gymnastic schools, in which, to much physical, some intellectual, discipline was added, under masters publicly nominated. But from the very circumstance of compulsory education at that age, and the absence of it in childhood, we may suppose that there had already grown up in Athens a moral obligation and a general custom, to prepare the youth of the state for the national schools.

Besides the free citizens, there were two subordinate classes—the aliens and the slaves. By the first are meant those composed of settlers,

tion which modern writers have rejected as incompatible with their constant revision. It was not, however, so contradictory a decree as it seems at first glance—for one of the laws not to be altered was this power of amending and revising the laws. And, therefore, the enactment in dispute would only imply that the constitution was not to be altered except through the constitutional channel which Solon had appointed.

who had not relinquished connexion with their native countries. These, as universally in Greece, were widely distinguished from the citizens; they paid a small annual sum for the protection of the state, and each became a kind of client to some individual citizen, who appeared for him in the courts of justice. They were also forbidden to purchase land; but for the rest, Solon, himself a merchant, appears to have given to such aliens encouragements in trade and manufacture not usual in that age; and most of their disabilities were probably rather moral or imaginary than real and daily causes of grievance. The great and paramount distinction was between the freeman and the slave. No slave could be admitted as a witness, *except by torture;* as for him there was no voice in the state, so for him there was no tenderness in the law. But though the slave might not avenge himself on the master, the system of slavery avenged itself on the state. The advantages to the intellect of the free citizens resulting from the existence of a class maintained to relieve them from the drudgeries of life, were dearly purchased by the constant insecurity of their political repose. The capital of the rich could never be directed to the most productive of all channels—the labour of free competition. The noble did not employ citizens

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—he purchased slaves. Thus the commonwealth derived the least possible advantage from his wealth; it did not flow through the heart of the republic, employing the idle, and feeding the poor. As a necessary consequence, the inequalities of fortune were sternly visible and deeply felt. The rich man had no connexion with the poor man—the poor man hated him for a wealth of which he did not (as in states where slavery does not exist) share the blessings—purchasing by labour the advantages of fortune. Hence the distinction of classes defied the harmonizing effects of popular legislation. The rich were exposed to unjust and constant exactions; and society was ever liable to be disorganized by attacks upon property. There was an eternal struggle between the jealousies of the populace and the fears of the wealthy; and many of the disorders which modern historians inconsiderately ascribe to the institutions of freedom were in reality the growth of the existence of slavery.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEPARTURE OF SOLON FROM ATHENS—THE RISE OF PISISTRATUS—RETURN OF SOLON—HIS CONDUCT AND DEATH—THE SECOND AND THIRD TYRANNY OF PISISTRATUS—CAPTURE OF SIGEUM—COLONY IN THE CHERSONESUS FOUNDED BY THE FIRST MILTIADES—DEATH OF PISISTRATUS.

I. ALTHOUGH the great constitutional reforms of Solon were, no doubt, carried into effect during his archonship—yet several of his legislative and judicial enactments were probably the work of years. When we consider the many interests to conciliate, the many prejudices to overcome, which in all popular states cripple and delay the progress of change in its several details, we find little difficulty in supposing, with one of the most luminous of modern scholars,* that Solon had ample occupation for twenty years after the date of his archonship. During this period little occurred in the foreign affairs of Athens save the prosperous termination of the Cirrhæan war, as

* See Fast. Hell. vol. ii. 276.

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before recorded. At home the new constitution gradually took root, although often menaced and sometimes shaken by the storms of party and the general desire for farther innovation.*

The eternal consequence of popular change is, that while it irritates the party that loses power, it cannot content the party that gains. It is obvious that each concession to the people but renders them better able to demand concessions more important. The theories of some—the demands of others—harassed the lawgiver, and threatened the safety of the laws. Solon, at length, was induced to believe that his ordinances required the sanction and repose of time, and that absence—that moral death—would not only free himself from importunity, but his infant institutions from the frivolous disposition of change. In his earlier years he had repaired, by commercial pursuits, estates that had been impoverished by the munificence of his father; and, still cultivating the same resources, he made pretence of his vocation to solicit permission for an absence of ten years. He is said to have obtained a solemn promise from the people to alter none of his institutions during that period;*

* Including, as I before observed, that law which provided for any constitutional change in a constitutional manner.

and thus he departed from the city, of whose future glories he had laid the solid foundation. Attracted by his philosophical habits to that solemn land, beneath whose mysteries the credulous Greeks revered the secrets of existent wisdom, the still adventurous Athenian repaired to the cities of the Nile, and fed the passion of speculative inquiry from the learning of the Egyptian priests. Departing thence to Cyprus, he assisted, as his own verses assure us, in the planning of a new city, founded by one of the kings of that beautiful island, and afterwards invited to the court of Crœsus—(associated with his father Alyattes, then living,) he imparted to the Lydian, amidst the splendours of state and the adulation of slaves, that well-known lesson on the uncertainty of human grandeur, which, according to Herodotus, Crœsus so seasonably remembered at the funeral pile.*

Probably B.C. 575.

> Et Crœsum quem vox justi facunda Solonis
> Respicere ad longæ jussit spatia ultima vitæ."
>
> Juv. Sat. x. s. 273.

The story of the interview and conversation between Crœsus and Solon is supported by so many concurrent authorities, that we cannot but feel grateful to the modern learning, which has removed the only objection to it in an apparent contradiction of dates. If, as contended for by Larcher, still more ably by Wesseling, and since by Mr. Clinton, we agree that Crœsus reigned jointly with his father Alyattes, the difficulty vanishes at once.

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II. However prudent had appeared to Solon his absence from Athens, it is to be lamented that he did not rather brave the hazards from which his genius might have saved the state, than incur those which the very removal of a master-spirit was certain to occasion. We may bind men not to change laws, but we cannot bind the spirit and the opinion, from which laws alone derive cogency or value. We may guard against the innovations of a multitude, which a wise statesman sees afar off, and may direct to great ends; but we cannot guard against that dangerous accident—not to be foreseen, not to be directed—the ambition of a man of genius! During the absence of Solon there rose into eminence one of those remarkable persons who give to vicious designs all the attraction of individual virtues. Bold, generous, affable, eloquent, endowed with every gift of nature and fortune—kinsman to Solon, but of greater wealth and more dazzling qualities—the young Pisistratus, son of Hippocrates, early connected himself with the democratic or highland party. The Megarians, who had never relinquished their designs on Salamis, had taken an opportunity, apparently before the travels, and, according to Plutarch, even before the legislation of Solon, to repossess themselves of the island.

When the Athenians were enabled to extend their energies beyond their own great domestic revolution, Pisistratus obtained the command of an expedition against these dangerous neighbours, which was attended with the most signal success. A stratagem referred to Solon by Plutarch, who has with so contagious an inaccuracy blended into one the two several and distinct expeditions of Pisistratus and Solon, ought rather to be placed to the doubtful glory of the son of Hippocrates.* A number of young men sailed with Pisistratus to Colias, and taking the dress of women, whom they there seized while sacrificing to Ceres, a spy was despatched to Salamis to inform the Megarian guard that many of the principal Athenian matrons were at Colias, and might be easily captured. The Megarians were decoyed, despatched a body of men to the opposite shore,

* Plutarch gives two accounts of the recovery of Salamis by Solon, one of them, which is also preferred by Ælian, (var. c. xix. lib. vii.) I have adopted and described in my narrative of that expedition; the second I now give, but refer to Pisistratus not Solon; in support of which opinion I am indebted to Mr. Clinton for the suggestion of two authorities. Æneas tacticus, in his Treatise on Sieges, chap. iv., and Frontinus de Stratagem. lib. iv. cap. vii.—Justin also favours the claim of Pisistratus to this stratagem, lib. xi. c. viii.

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and beholding a group in women's attire dancing by the strand, landed confusedly to seize the prize. The pretended females drew forth their concealed weapons, and the Megarians, surprised and dismayed, were cut off to a man. The victors lost no time in setting sail for Salamis, and easily regained the isle. Pisistratus carried the war into Megara itself, and captured the Port of Nisæa. These exploits were the foundation of his after-greatness; and yet young, at the return of Solon, he was already at the head of the democratic party. But neither his rank, his genius, nor his popular influence, sufficed to give to his faction a decided eminence over those of his rivals. The wealthy nobles of the Lowlands were led by Lycurgus—the moderate party of the Coastmen by Megacles, the head of the Alcmæonidæ. And it was in the midst of the strife and agitation produced by these great sections of the people that Solon returned to Athens.

III. The venerable legislator was received with all the grateful respect he deserved; but age had dimmed the brilliancy of his powers. His voice could no longer penetrate the mighty crowds of the market-place. New idols had sprung up—new passions were loosed—new interests formed, and amidst the roar and stir of

the eternal Movement, it was in vain for the high-hearted old man to recall those rushing on the future to the boundaries of the past. If unsuccessful in public, he was not discouraged from applying in private to the leaders of the several parties. Of all those rival nobles, none deferred to his advice with so marked a respect as the smooth and plausible Pisistratus. Perhaps, indeed, that remarkable man contemplated the same objects as Solon himself,—although the one desired to effect by the authority of the chief, the order and the energy which the other would have trusted to the developement of the people. But, masking his more interested designs, Pisistratus outbid all competition in his seeming zeal for the public welfare. The softness of his manners—his profuse liberality—his generosity even to his foes—the splendid qualities which induced Cicero to compare him to Julius Cæsar,* charmed the imagination of the multitude, and concealed the selfishness of his views. He was not a hypocrite indeed as to his virtues—a dissembler only in his ambition. Even Solon, in endeavouring to inspire him with a true patriotism, acknowledged

* The most sanguine hope indeed that Cicero seems to have formed with respect to the conduct of Cæsar, was that he might *deserve* the title of the Pisistratus of Rome.

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his talents and his excellencies. "But for ambition," said he, "Athens possesses no citizen worthier than Pisistratus." The time became ripe for the aspiring projects of the chief of the democracy.

IV. The customary crowd was swarming in the market-place, when suddenly, in the midst of the assembly, appeared the chariot of Pisistratus. The mules were bleeding—Pisistratus himself was wounded. In this condition the demagogue harangued the people. He declared that he had just escaped from the enemies of himself and the popular party, who (under the auspices of the Alcmæonidæ) had attacked him in a country excursion. He reminded the crowd of his services in war—his valour against the Megarians—his conquest of Nisæa. He implored their protection. Indignant and inflamed, the favouring audience shouted their sympathy with his wrongs. "Son of Hippocrates," said Solon, advancing to the spot, and with bitter wit, "you are but a bad imitator of Ulysses. He wounded himself to delude his enemies—you to deceive your countrymen."* The sagacity of the reproach was unheeded by the crowd. A special assembly of

* If we may, in this anecdote, accord to Plutarch (de Vit. Sol.) and Ælian, (Var. lib. viii. c. xvi.) a belief which I see no reason for withholding.

the people was convened, and a partisan of the demagogue moved that a body-guard of fifty men, armed but with clubs, should be assigned to his protection. Despite the infirmities of his age, and the decrease of his popular authority, Solon had the energy to oppose the motion, and predict its results. The credulous love of the people swept away all precaution—the guard was granted. Its number did not long continue stationary; Pisistratus artfully increased the amount, till it swelled to the force required by his designs. He then seized the citadel—the antagonist faction of Megacles fled—and Pisistratus was master of Athens. Amidst the confusion and tumult of the city, Solon retained his native courage. He appeared in public—harangued the citizens—upbraided their blindness—invoked their courage. In his speeches he bade them remember that if it be the more easy task to prevent tyranny, it is the more glorious achievement to destroy it. In his verses* he poured forth the indignant sentiment which a thousand later bards have borrowed and enlarged;—"Blame not Heaven for your tyrants, blame yourselves." The fears of some, the indifference of others, rendered his

* His own verses, rather than the narrative of Plutarch, are the evidence of Solon's conduct on the usurpation of Pisistratus.

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V. The remaining days and the latter conduct of Solon are involved in obscurity. According to Plutarch, he continued at Athens, Pisistratus showing him the utmost respect, and listening to the councils which Solon condescended to bestow upon him: according to Diogenes Laertius, he departed again from his native city,* indignant at its submission, and hopeless of its freedom, refusing all overtures from Pisistratus, and alleging that having established a free government he would not appear to sanction the success of a tyrant. Either account is sufficiently probable. The wisdom of Solon might consent to

* This historian fixes the date of Solon's visit to Crœsus and to Cyprus, (on which island he asserts him to have died,) not during his absence of ten years, but during the final exile for which he contends.

mitigate what he could not cure, or his patriotism might urge him to avoid witnessing the changes he had no power to prevent. The dispute is of little importance. At his advanced age he could not have long survived the usurpation of Pisistratus, nor can we find any authority for the date of his death so entitled to credit as that of Phanias, who assigns it to the year following the usurpation of Pisistratus. The bright race was already run. According to the grave authority of Aristotle, the ashes of Solon were scattered over the isle of Salamis, which had been the scene of his earlier triumphs; and Athens retaining his immortal, boasted not his perishable, remains.

VI. Pisistratus directed with admirable moderation the courses of the revolution he had produced. Many causes of success were combined in his favour. His enemies had been the supposed enemies of the people, and the multitude doubtless beheld the flight of the Alcmæonidæ (still odious in their eyes by the massacre of Cylon) as the defeat of a foe, while the triumph of the popular chief was recognized as the victory of the people. In all revolutions the man who has sided with the people is permitted by the people the greatest extent of license. It is easy to perceive, by the general desire which

BOOK II. CHAP. II. the Athenians had expressed for the elevation of Solon to the supréme authority, that the notion of regal authority was not yet hateful to them, and that they were scarcely prepared for the liberties with which they were entrusted. But although they submitted thus patiently to the ascendency of Pisistratus, it is evident that a less benevolent, or less artful tyrant would not have been equally successful. Raised above the law, that subtle genius governed only by the law; nay, he affected to consider its authority greater than his own. He assumed no title—no attribute of sovereignty. He was accused of murder, and he humbly appeared before the tribunal of the Areopagus—a proof not more of the moderation of the usurper than of the influence of public opinion. He enforced the laws of Solon, and compelled the unruly tempers of his faction to subscribe to their wholesome rigour. The one revolution did not, therefore, supplant, it confirmed, the other. "*By these means,*" says Herodotus, "Pisistratus mastered Athens, and yet his situation was far from secure."*

VII. Although the heads of the more moderate party, under Megacles, had been expelled from Athens, yet the faction, equally powerful,

* Herod. l. i. c. 49.

and equally hostile, headed by Lycurgus, and embraced by the bulk of the nobles, still remained. For a time, extending perhaps to five or six years, Pisistratus retained his power; but at length, Lycurgus, uniting with the exiled Alcmæonidæ, succeeded in expelling him from the city. But the union that had led to his expulsion, ceased with that event. The contests between the Lowlanders and the Coastmen were only more inflamed by the defeat of the third party which had operated as a balance of power, and the broils of their several leaders were fed by personal ambition as by hereditary animosities. Megacles, therefore, unable to maintain equal ground with Lycurgus, turned his thoughts towards the enemy he had subdued, and sent proposals to Pisistratus, offering to unite their forces, and to support him in his pretensions to the tyranny, upon condition that the exiled chief should marry his daughter Cœsyra. Pisistratus readily acceded to the terms, and it was resolved by a theatrical pageant to reconcile his return to the people. In one of the boroughs of the city there was a woman named Phya, of singular beauty and lofty stature. Clad in complete armour, and drawn in a chariot, this woman was conducted with splendour and triumph towards the city. By her side rode Pisis-

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The sagacity of the Athenians was already so acute, and the artifice appeared to Herodotus so gross, that the simple Halicarnassean could scarcely credit the authenticity of this tale. But it is possible that the people viewed the procession as an ingenious allegory, to the adaptation of which they were already disposed; and that like the populace of a later and yet more civilized people, they hailed the goddess while they recognised the prostitute.* Be that as it may, the son of Hippocrates recovered his authority and fulfilled his treaty with Megacles by a marriage with his daughter. Between the commencement of his first tyranny and the date of his second return, there was probably an interval of twelve years. His sons were already adults. Partly from a desire not to increase his family, partly from some superstitious disinclination to the blood of the Alcmæonidæ, which the massacre of Cylon still stigmatized with contamina-

* The procession of the goddess of Reason in the first French revolution solves the difficulty that perplexed Herodotus.

tion, Pisistratus conducted himself towards the fair Cœsyra with a chastity either unwelcome to her affection, or afflicting to her pride. The unwedded wife communicated the mortifying secret to her mother, from whose lips it soon travelled to the father. He did not view the purity of Pisistratus with charitable eyes. He thought it an affront to his own person that that of his daughter should be so tranquilly regarded. He entered into a league with his former opponents against the usurper, and so great was the danger, that Pisistratus (despite his habitual courage) betook himself hastily to flight:—a strange instance of the caprice of human events, that a man could with a greater impunity subdue the freedom of his country, than affront the vanity of his wife!*

VIII. Pisistratus, his sons and partisans, retired to Eretria in Eubœa: there they deliberated as to their future proceedings—should they submit to their exile, or attempt to retrieve their power? The councils of his son Hippias, prevailed with Pisistratus; it was resolved once more to attempt

* Mr. Mitford considers this story as below the credit of history. He gives no sufficient reasons against its reception, and would doubtless have been less sceptical had he known more of the social habits of that time, or possessed more intimate acquaintance with human nature generally.

the sovereignty of Athens. The neighbouring tribes assisted the exiles with forage and shelter. Many cities accorded the celebrated noble large sums of money, and the Thebans outdid the rest in pernicious liberality. A troop of Argive adventures came from the Peloponnesus to tender to the baffled usurper the assistance of their swords, and Lygdamis, an individual of Naxos, himself ambitious of the government of his native state, increased his resources both by money and military force. At length, though after a long and tedious period of no less than eleven years, Pisistratus resolved to hazard the issue of open war. At the head of a foreign force he advanced to Marathon, and pitched his tents upon its immortal plain. Troops of the factious, or discontented, thronged from Athens to his camp, while the bulk of the citizens, unaffected by such desertions, viewed his preparations with indifference. At length, when they heard that Pisistratus had broken up his encampment, and was on his march to the city, the Athenians awoke from their apathy, and collected their forces to oppose him. He continued to advance his troops, halted at the temple of Minerva, whose earthly representative had once so benignly assisted him, and pitched his tents opposite the fane. He took advantage of that time in

which the Athenians, during the heats of the day, were at their entertainments, or indulging the noontide repose, still so grateful to the inhabitants of a warmer climate, to commence his attack. He soon scattered the foe, and ordered his sons to overtake them in their flight, to bid them return peaceably to their employments, and fear nothing from his vengeance. His clemency assisted the effect of his valour, and once more the son of Hippocrates became the master of the Athenian commonwealth.

IX. Pisistratus lost no time in strengthening himself by formidable alliances. He retained many auxiliary troops, and provided large pecuniary resources.* He spared the persons of his

* Upon which points, of men and money, Mr. Mitford, who is anxious to redeem the character of Pisistratus from the stain of tyranny, is dishonestly prevaricating. Quoting Herodotus, who especially insists upon these undue sources of aid, in the following words—Ἐρρίζωσε τὴν τυραννίδα, ἐπικούροισί τε πολλοῖσι καὶ χρημάτων συνόδοισι, τῶν μὲν, αὐτόθεν, τῶν δὲ, ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος ποταμοῦ συνιόντων: this candid historian merely says, "*A particular interest with* the ruling parties in several neighbouring states, especially Thebes and Argos, and a *wise and liberal use of a very great private property*, were the resources in which besides he mostly relied." Why he thus slurs over the fact of the auxiliary forces will easily be perceived. He wishes us to

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opponents, but sent their children as hostages to Naxos, which he first reduced and consigned to the tyranny of his auxiliary, Lygdamis. Many of his inveterate enemies had perished on the field—many fled from the fear of his revenge. He was undisturbed in the renewal of his sway, and having no motive for violence, pursued the natural bent of a mild and generous disposition, ruling as one who wishes men to forget the means by which his power has been attained. Pisistratus had that passion for letters which distinguished most of the more brilliant Athenians. Although the poems of Homer were widely known and deeply venerated long before his time, yet he appears by a more accurate collection and arrangement of them, and probably by bringing them into a more general and active circulation in Athens, to have largely added to the wonderful impetus to poetical emulation, which those immortal writings were calculated to give.

When we consider how much, even in our own times, and with all the advantages of the Press, the diffused fame and intellectual influence

understand that the third tyranny of Pisistratus, being wholesome, was also acceptable, to the Athenians, and not, as it in great measure was, supported by borrowed treasure and foreign swords.

of Shakspeare and Milton have owed to the praise and criticism of individuals, we may readily understand the kind of service rendered by Pisistratus to Homer. The very example of so eminent a man would have drawn upon the poet a less vague and more inquiring species of admiration; the increased circulation of copies —the more frequent public recitals—were advantages timed at that happy season when the people who enjoyed them had grown up from wondering childhood to imitative and studious youth. And certain it is, that from this period we must date the marked and pervading influence of Homer upon Athenian poetry; for the renown of a poet often precedes by many generations the visible influence of his peculiar genius. It is chiefly within the last seventy years that we may date the wonderful effect that Shakspeare was destined to produce upon the universal intellect of Europe. The literary obligations of Athens to Pisistratus were not limited to his exertions on behalf of Homer: he is said to have been the first in Greece who founded a Public Library, rendering its treasures accessible to all. And these two benefits united, justly entitle the fortunate usurper to the praise

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of first calling into active existence that intellectual and literary spirit which became diffused amongst the Athenian people, and originated the models and masterpieces of the world. It was in harmony with this part of his character that Pisistratus refined the taste and socialized the habits of the citizens, by the erection of buildings dedicated to the public worship, or the public uses, and laid out the stately gardens of the Lyceum—(in after-times the favourite haunt of Philosophy,) by the banks of the river dedicated to Song. Pisistratus thus did more than continue the laws of Solon—he inculcated the intellectual habits which the laws were designed to create. And as in the circle of human events the faults of one man often confirm what was begun by the virtues of another, so perhaps the usurpation of Pisistratus was necessary to establish the institutions of Solon. It is clear that the great lawgiver was not appreciated at the close of his life; as his personal authority had ceased to have influence, so possibly might have soon ceased the authority of his code. The citizens required repose, to examine, to feel, to estimate the blessings of his laws—that repose they possessed under Pisistratus. Amidst the tumult of fierce and equipoised factions it might be for-

tunate that a single individual was raised above the rest, who, having the wisdom to appreciate the institutions of Solon, had the authority to enforce them. Silently they grew up under his usurped but benignant sway, pervading, penetrating, exalting the people, and fitting them by degrees to the liberty those institutions were intended to confer. If the disorders of the republic led to the ascendency of Pisistratus, so the ascendency of Pisistratus paved the way for the renewal of the republic. As Cromwell was the representative of the very sentiments he appeared to subvert—as Napoleon in his own person incorporated the principles of the revolution of France, so the tyranny of Pisistratus concentrated and embodied the elements of that democracy he rather wielded than overthrew.

X. At home, time and tranquillity cemented the new laws; poetry set before the emulation of the Athenians its noblest monument in the epics of Homer; and tragedy put forth its first unmellowed fruits in the rude recitations of Thespis.* Pisistratus sought also to counter- B.C. 535.

* Who, according to Plutarch, first appeared at the return of Solon; but the proper date for his exhibitions is ascertained, (Fast. Hell. vol. ii. p. 11,) several years after Solon's death.

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balance the growing passion for commerce by peculiar attention to agriculture, in which it is not unlikely that he was considerably influenced by early prepossessions, for his party had been the mountaineers attached to rural pursuits, and his adversaries the coastmen engaged in traffic. As a politician of great sagacity, he might also have been aware, that a people accustomed to agricultural employments are ever less inclined to democratic institutions, than one addicted to commerce and manufactures; and if he were the author of a law, which at all events he more rigidly enforced, requiring every citizen to give an account of his mode of livelihood, and affixing punishments to idleness, he could not have taken wiser precautions against such seditions as are begot by poverty upon indolence, or under a juster plea have established the superintendence of a concealed police. We learn from Aristotle that his policy consisted much in subjecting and humbling the Pediæi, or wealthy nobles of the Lowlands. But his very affection to agriculture must have tended to strengthen an aristocracy, and his humility to the Areopagus was a proof of his desire to conciliate the least democratic of the Athenian courts. He probably, therefore, acted only against such individual chiefs as had incurred his resentment,

or as menaced his power; nor can we perceive in his measures the systematic and deliberate policy, common with other Greek tyrants, to break up an aristocracy and create a middle class.

XI. Abroad, the ambition of Pisistratus, though not extensive, was successful. There was a town on the Hellespont, called Sigeum, which had long been a subject of contest between the Athenians and the Mitylenæans. Some years before the legislation of Solon, the Athenian general, Phryno, had been slain in single combat by Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, who had come into the field armed like the Roman retiarius, with a net, a trident, and a dagger. This feud was terminated by the arbitration of Periander, tyrant of Corinth, who awarded Sigeum to the Athenians, which was then in their possession, by a wise and plausible decree, that each party should keep what it had got. This war was chiefly remarkable for an incident that introduces us somewhat unfavourably to the most animated of the lyric poets. Alcæus, an eminent citizen of Mitylene, and, according to ancient scandal, the unsuccessful lover of Sappho, conceived a passion for military fame: in his first engagement he seems to have discovered that his proper vocation was rather

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to sing of battles than to share them. He fled from the field, leaving his arms behind him, which the Athenians obtained, and suspended at Sigeum in the Temple of Minerva. Although this single action, which Alcæus himself recorded, cannot be fairly held a sufficient proof of the poet's cowardice, yet his character and patriotism are more equivocal than his genius. Of the last we have ample testimony,—though few remains save in the frigid grace of the imitations of Horace. The subsequent weakness and civil dissensions of Athens, were not favourable to the maintenance of this distant conquest —the Mitylenæans regained Sigeum. Against this town Pisistratus now directed his arms—wrested it from the Mitylenæans—and instead of annexing it to the republic of Athens, assigned its government to the tyranny of his natural son, Hegesistratus,—a stormy dominion, which the valour of the bastard defended against repeated assaults.*

* These two wars, divided by so great an interval of time, —the one terminated by Periander, of Corinth, the other undertaken by Pisistratus,—are, with the usual blundering of Mr. Mitford, jumbled together into the same event. He places Alcæus in the war following the conquest of Sigeum by Pisistratus. Poor Alcæus! the poet flourished Olym. 42, (611 B. C.;) the third tyranny of Pisistratus may date some-

XII. But one incident, the full importance of which the reader must wait awhile to perceive, I shall in this place relate. Among the most powerful of the Athenians was a noble named Miltiades, son of Cypselus. By original descent, he was from the neighbouring island of Ægina, and of the heroic race of Æacus; but he dated the establishment of his house in Athens from no less distant a founder than the son of Ajax. Miltiades had added new lustre to his name by a victory at the Olympic games. It was probably during the first tyranny of Pisistratus* that an

where about 537 B. C., so that Alcæus, had he been alive in the time ascribed by Mr. Mitford to his warlike exhibitions, would have been (supposing him to be born twenty-six years before the date of his celebrity in 611) just a hundred years old—a fitting age to commence the warrior! The fact is, Mr. Mitford adopted the rather confused account of Herodotus, without taking the ordinary pains to ascertain dates, which to every one else the very names of Periander and Alcæus would have suggested.

* For the reader will presently observe the share taken by Crœsus in the affairs of this Miltiades during his government in the Chersonesus; now Crœsus was conquered by Cyrus about B. C. 546—it must, therefore, have been before that period. But the third tyranny of Pisistratus appears to have commenced nine years afterwards, viz. B. C. 537. The second tyranny probably commenced only two years before the fall of the Lydian monarchy, and seems to have lasted only a year, and during that period Crœsus no longer exer-

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adventure, attended with vast results to Greece, befell this noble. His family were among the enemies of Pisistratus, and were regarded by that sagacious usurper with a jealous apprehension, which almost appears prophetic. Miltiades was, therefore, uneasy under the government of Pisistratus, and discontented with his position in Athens. One day, as he sate before his door, (such is the expression of the enchanting Herodotus, unconscious of the patriarchal picture he suggests,) * Miltiades observed certain strangers pass by, whose garments and spears denoted them to be foreigners. The sight touched the chief, and he offered the strangers the use of his house and the rites of hospitality. They accepted his invitation, were charmed by his courtesy, and revealed to him the secret of their travel. In that narrow territory which, skirting the Hellespont, was called the Chersonesus, or Peninsula, dwelt the Doloncians, a Thracian tribe. Engaged in an obstinate war with the

cised over the cities of the coast the influence he exerted with the people of Lampsacus on behalf of Miltiades; the departure of Miltiades, son of Cypselus, must therefore have been in the first tyranny, in the interval 560 B. C.—554 B. C., and probably at the very commencement of the reign—viz. about 559 B. C.

* In the East, the master of the family still sits before the door to receive visitors or transact business.

neighbouring Absinthians, the Doloncians had sent to the oracle of Delphi to learn the result of the contest. The Pythian recommended the messengers to persuade the first man who, on their quitting the temple, should offer them the rites of hospitality, to found a colony in their native land. Passing homeward through Phocis and Bœotia, and receiving no such invitation by the way, the messengers turned aside to Athens; Miltiades was the first who offered them the hospitality they sought; they entreated him now to comply with the oracle, and assist their countrymen; the discontented noble was allured by the splendour of the prospect—he repaired in person to Delphi—consulted the Pythian—received a propitious answer—and collecting all such of the Athenians as his authority could enlist, or their own ambition could decoy, he repaired to the Chersonesus. There he fortified a great part of the isthmus, as a barrier to the attacks of the Absinthians; but shortly afterwards, in a feud with the people of Lampsacus, he was taken prisoner by the enemy. Miltiades, however, had already secured the esteem and protection of Crœsus; and the Lydian monarch remonstrated with the Lampsacenes in so formidable a tone of menace, that the Athenian obtained his release, and regained his new principality. In the meanwhile, his

Probably B.C. 559.

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brother Cimon, (who was chiefly remarkable for his success at the Olympic games,) sharing the political sentiments of his house, had been driven into exile by Pisistratus. By a transfer to the brilliant tyrant of a victory in the Olympic chariot-race, he, however, propitiated Pisistratus, and returned to Athens.

XIII. Full of years, and in the serene enjoyment of power, Pisistratus died. His character may already be gathered from his actions: crafty in the pursuit of power, but magnanimous in its possession, we have only, with some qualification, to repeat the eulogium on him ascribed to his greater kinsman Solon—"That he was the best of tyrants, and without a vice save that of ambition."

B.C. 527.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF HIPPIAS—THE CONSPIRACY OF HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGITON—THE DEATH OF HIPPARCHUS—CRUELTIES OF HIPPIAS—THE YOUNG MILTIADES SENT TO THE CHERSONESUS—THE SPARTANS COMBINE WITH THE ALCMÆONIDÆ AGAINST HIPPIAS—THE FALL OF THE TYRANNY—THE INNOVATIONS OF CLISTHENES—HIS EXPULSION AND RESTORATION—EMBASSY TO THE SATRAP OF SARDIS—RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE LYDIAN, MEDIAN, AND PERSIAN MONARCHIES—RESULT OF THE ATHENIAN EMBASSY TO SARDIS—CONDUCT OF CLEOMENES—VICTORY OF THE ATHENIANS AGAINST THE BŒOTIANS AND CHALCIDIANS—HIPPIAS ARRIVES AT SPARTA—THE SPEECH OF SOSICLES, THE CORINTHIAN—HIPPIAS RETIRES TO SARDIS.

I. Upon the death of Pisistratus, his three sons, Hipparchus, Hippias, and Thessalus, succeeded to the government. Nor, though Hippias was the eldest, does he seem to have exercised a more prominent authority than the rest—since, in the time of Thucydides, and long afterwards, it was the popular error to consider Hipparchus the first-born. Hippias was already of mature age; and, as we have seen, it was he who had counselled his father not to despair after his expulsion from Athens. He was a man of courage and ability worthy of his race. He governed with the same careful respect for the laws which had distinguished and strengthened the authority of his predecessor.

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He even rendered himself yet more popular than Pisistratus, by reducing one-half the impost of a tithe on the produce of the land which that usurper had imposed. Notwithstanding this relief, he was enabled, by a prudent economy, to flatter the national vanity by new embellishments to the city. In the labours of his government he was principally aided by his second brother, Hipparchus, a man of a yet more accomplished and intellectual order of mind. But, although Hippias did not alter the laws, he chose his own creatures to administer them: Besides whatever share in the government was intrusted to his brothers, Hipparchus and Thessalus, his son and several of his family were enrolled among the archons of the city. And they who by office were intended for the guardians of liberty were the necessary servants of the tyrant.

II. If we might place unhesitating faith in the authenticity of the dialogue attributed to Plato under the title of "Hipparchus," we should have indeed high authority in favour of the virtues and the wisdom of that prince. And by whomsoever the dialogue was written, it refers to facts, in the passage relative to the son of Pisistratus, in a manner sufficiently positive to induce us to regard that portion of it with some deference. According to the author, we

learn that Hipparchus, passionately attached to letters, brought Anacreon to Athens, and lived familiarly with Simonides. He seems to have been inspired with the ambition of a moralist, and distributed Hermæ, or stone busts of Mercury, about the city and the public roads, which, while answering a similar purpose to our mile-stones, arrested the eye of the passenger with pithy and laconic apothegms in verse; such as, "Do not deceive your friend," and "Persevere in affection to justice;"—proofs rather of the simplicity than the wisdom of the prince. It is not by writing the decalogue upon mile-stones that the robber would be terrified, or the adulterer converted.

It seems that the apothegmatical Hipparchus did not associate with Anacreon more from sympathy with his genius, than inclination to the subjects to which it was devoted. He was addicted to pleasure; nor did he confine its pursuits to the more legitimate objects of sensual affection. Harmodius, a young citizen of no exalted rank, but much personal beauty, incurred the affront of his addresses.* Harmodius, in re-

* Thucydides, b. vi. c. 54. The dialogue of Hipparchus, ascribed to Plato, gives a different story, but much of the same nature. In matters of history, we cannot doubt which is the best authority, Thucydides or Plato,—especially an apocryphal Plato.

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sentment, confided the overtures of the moralist to his friend and preceptor, Aristogiton. While the two were brooding over the outrage, Hipparchus, in revenge for the disdain of Harmodius, put a public insult upon the sister of that citizen, a young maiden. She received a summons to attend some public procession, as bearer of one of the sacred vessels: on presenting herself she was abruptly rejected, with the rude assertion that she never could have been honoured with an invitation of which she was unworthy. This affront rankled deeply in the heart of Harmodius, but still more in that of the friendly Aristogiton, and they now finally resolved upon revenge. At the solemn festival of Panathenæa, (in honour of Minerva,) it was the custom for many of the citizens to carry arms in the procession: for this occasion they reserved the blow. They entrusted their designs to few, believing that if once the attempt was begun the people would catch the contagion, and rush spontaneously to the assertion of their freedom. The festival arrived. Bent against the elder tyrant, perhaps from nobler motives than those which urged them against Hipparchus,* each armed

* Although it is probable that the patriotism of Aristogiton and Harmodius "the beloved," has been elevated in after times beyond its real standard, yet Mr. Mitford is not justified in saying that it was private revenge, and *not any* poli-

with a dagger concealed in the sacred myrtle-bough which was borne by those who joined the procession, the conspirators advanced to the spot in the suburbs where Hippias was directing the order of the ceremonial. To their dismay, they perceived him conversing familiarly with one of their own partisans, and immediately suspected that to be the treason of their friend which in reality was the frankness of the affable prince. Struck with fear, they renounced their attempt upon Hippias, suddenly retreated to the city, and meeting with Hipparchus, rushed upon him, wounded, and slew him. Aristogiton turned to fly—he escaped the guards, but was afterwards seized, and "not mildly treated"* by the tyrant.

tical motive that induced them to conspire the death of Hippias and Hipparchus. Had it been so, why strike at Hippias at all?—why attempt to make him the *first* and principal victim?—why assail Hipparchus (against whom only they had a private revenge,) suddenly, by accident, and from the impulse of the moment, *after the failure of their* design on the tyrant himself, with whom they had no quarrel? It is most probable that, as in other attempts at revolution, that of Masaniello—that of Rienzi—public patriotism was not *created*—it was stimulated and made passion, by private resentment.

* Mr. Mitford has most curiously translated this passage thus:—"Aristogiton escaped the attending guards, but being taken *by the people* (!!!), was not mildly treated. So Thucy-

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Such is the phrase of Thucydides, which, if we may take the interpretation of Justin and the later writers, means that, contrary to the law, he was put to the torture.* Harmodius was slain upon the spot. The news of his brother's death was brought to Hippias. With an admirable sagacity and presence of mind, he repaired, not to the place of the assassination, but towards the procession itself, rightly judging that the conspiracy had only broken out in part. As yet the news of the death of Hipparchus had not reached the more distant conspirators in the procession, and Hippias betrayed not in the calmness of his countenance any signs of his sorrow or his fears. He approached the procession, and with a composed voice commanded them to deposit their arms, and file off towards a place which he indicated. They obeyed the order, imagining he had something to communicate to them. Then turning to his

dides has expressed himself." Now Thucydides says quite the reverse: he says, that *owing to the crowd of the people* the guard could not at first seize him. How did Mr. Mitford make this strange blunder? The most charitable supposition is, that not reading the Greek, he was misled by an error of punctuation in the Latin, version.

* "Qui cùm *per tormenta* conscios cædis nominare cogeretur," &c. (Justin. lib. ii. cap. ix.) This author differs from the elder writers as to the precise cause of the conspiracy.

guards, Hippias bade them seize the weapons thus deposited, and he himself selected from the procession all whom he had reason to suspect, or on whose persons a dagger was found, for it was only with the open weapons of spear and shield that the procession was lawfully to be made. Thus rose, and thus terminated, that conspiracy which gave to the noblest verse and the most enduring veneration the names of Harmodius and Aristogiton.' BOOK II. CHAP. III.

III. The acutest sharpener of tyranny is an unsuccessful attempt to destroy it—to arouse the suspicion of Power is almost to compel it to cruelty. Hitherto we have seen that Hippias had graced his authority with beneficent moderation; the death of his brother filled him with secret alarm; and the favour of the populace at the attempted escape of Aristogiton—the ease with which, from a personal affront to an obscure individual, a formidable conspiracy had sprung up into life, convinced him that the arts of personal popularity are only to be relied on when the constitution of the government itself is popular.

It is also said that, when submitted to the tor-

* Herodotus says they were both Gephyræans by descent; a race, according to him, originally Phœnician.—Herod. b. v. c. 57.

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ture, Aristogiton, with all the craft of revenge, asserted the firmest friends of Hippias to have been his accomplices. Thus harassed by distrust, Hippias resolved to guard by terror a power which clemency had failed to render secure. He put several of the citizens to death. According to the popular traditions of romance, one of the most obnoxious acts of his severity was exercised upon a woman worthy to be the mistress of Aristogiton. Leæna, a girl of humble birth, beloved by that adventurous citizen, was sentenced to the torture, and, that the pain might not wring from her any confession of the secrets of the conspiracy, she bit out her tongue. The Athenians, on afterwards recovering their liberties, dedicated to the heroine a brazen lioness, not inappropriately placed in the vicinity of a celebrated statue of Venus.* No longer depending on the love of the citizens, Hippias now looked abroad for the support of his power; he formed an alliance with Hippoclus, the prince of Lampsacus, by marrying his daughter with the son of that tyrant, who possessed considerable influence

* Mr. Mitford too hastily and broadly asserts the whole story of Leæna to be a fable; if, as we may gather from Pausanias, the statue of the lioness existed in his time, we may pause before we deny all authenticity to a tradition far from inconsonant with the manners of the time or the heroism of the sex.

at the Persian court, to which he already directed his eyes—whether as a support in the authority of the present, or an asylum against the reverses of the future.*

It was apparently about a year before the death of Hipparchus, that Stesagoras, the nephew and successor of that Miltiades who departed from Athens to found a colony in the Thracian Chersonesus, perished by an assassin's blow. Hippias, evidently deeming he had the right, as sovereign of the parent country, to appoint the governor of the colony, sent to the Chersonesus in that capacity the brother of the deceased, a namesake of the first founder, whose father, Cimon, from jealousy of his power or repute, had been murdered by the sons of Pisistratus.† The new Miltiades was a man of

* Thucyd. b. vi. c. 59.

† Herodotus b. vi. c. 103. In all probability, the same jealousy that murdered the father dismissed the son. Hippias was far too acute and too fearful not to perceive the rising talents and daring temper of Miltiades. By the way, will it be believed that Mitford, in his anxiety to prove Hippias and Hipparchus the most admirable persons possible, not only veils the unnatural passions of the last, but is utterly silent about the murder of Cimon, which is ascribed to the sons of Pisistratus by Herodotus, in the strongest and gravest terms—Mr. Thirlwall, (Hist. of Greece, vol. ii. p. 223,) erroneously attributes the assassination of Cimon to Pisistratus himself.

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consummate talents, but one who scrupled little as to the means by which to accomplish his objects. Arriving at his government, he affected a deep sorrow for the loss of his brother; the principal nobles of the various cities of the Chersonesus came in one public procession to condole with him; the crafty chief seized and loaded them with irons, and having thus ensnared the possible rivals of his power, or enemies of his designs, he secured the undisputed possession of the whole Chersonesus, and maintained his civil authority by a constant military force. A marriage with Hegesipyle, a daughter of one of the Thracian princes, at once enhanced the dignity and confirmed the sway of the young and aspiring chief. Some years afterwards, we shall see in this Miltiades the most eminent warrior of his age—at present we leave him to an unquiet and perilous power, and return to Hippias.

IV. A storm gathered rapidly on against the security and ambition of the tyrant. The high-born and haughty family of the Alcmæonids had been expelled from Athens at the victorious return of Pisistratus—their estates in Attica confiscated—their houses razed—their very sepulchres destroyed. After fruitless attempts against the oppressors, they had retired to Lipsydrium, a

fortress on the heights of Parnes, where they continued to cherish the hope of return, and the desire of revenge. Despite the confiscation of their Attic estates, their wealth and resources, elsewhere secured, were enormous. The temple of Delphi having been destroyed by fire, they agreed with the Amphictyons to rebuild it, and performed the holy task with a magnificent splendour far exceeding the conditions of the contract. But in that religious land, wealth thus lavished, was no unprofitable investment. The priests of Delphi were not insensible of the liberality of the exiles, and Clisthenes, the most eminent and able of the Alcmæonidæ, was more than suspected of suborning the Pythian. Sparta, the supporter of oligarchies, was the foe of tyrants, and every Spartan who sought the oracle was solemnly invoked to aid the glorious enterprise of delivering the Eupatrids of Athens from the yoke of the Pisistratidæ.

The Spartans were at length moved by instances so repeatedly urged. Policy could not but soften that jealous state to such appeals to her superstition. Under the genius of the Pisistratidæ, Athens had rapidly advanced in power, and the restoration of the Alcmæonidæ might have seemed to the Spartan sagacity but another term for the establishment of that former

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oligarchy which had repressed the intellect and exhausted the resources of an active and aspiring people. Sparta aroused herself, then, at length, and "though in violation," says Herodotus, "of some ancient ties of hospitality," despatched a force by sea against the Prince of Athens. That alert and able ruler lost no time in seeking assistance from his allies, the Thessalians; and one of their powerful Princes led a thousand horsemen against the Spartans, who had debarked at Phalerum. Joined by these allies, Hippias engaged and routed the enemy, and the Spartan leader himself fell upon the field of battle. His tomb was long visible in Cynosarges, near the gates of Athens—a place rendered afterwards more illustrious by giving name to the Cynic Philosophers.*

Undismayed by their defeat, the Spartans now despatched a more considerable force against the tyrant, under command of their king Cleomenes. This army proceeded by land —entered Attica—encountered, defeated, the Thessalian horse†—and marched towards the

* Suidas. Laertius iv. 13, &c. Others, as Ammonius and Simplicius ad Aristotelem, derive the name of Cynics given to these philosophers from the ridicule attached to their manners.

† Whose ardour appears to have been soon damped. They lost but forty men, and then retired at once to Thessaly.

gates of Athens, joined, as they proceeded, by all those Athenians who hoped, in the downfall of Hippias, the resurrection of their liberties. The Spartan troops hastened to besiege the Athenian prince in the citadel, to which he retired with his forces. But Hippias had provided his refuge with all the necessaries which might maintain him in a stubborn and prolonged resistance. The Spartans were unprepared for the siege—the blockade of a few days sufficed to dishearten them, and they already meditated a retreat. A sudden incident, opening to us in the midst of violence one of those beautiful glimpses of human affection which so often adorn and sanctify the darker pages of history, unexpectedly secured the Spartan triumph. Hippias and his friends, fearing the safety of their children in the citadel, resolved to dismiss them privately to some place of greater security. Unhappily, their care was frustrated, and the children fell into the hands of the enemy. All the means of success within their reach, (the

This reminds us of the wars between the Italian republics, in which the loss of a single horseman was considered no trifling misfortune. The value of the steed and the rank of the horseman (always above the vulgar) made the cavalry of Greece easily discouraged by what appears to us an inconsiderable slaughter.

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foe wearied—the garrison faithful,) the parents yet resigned themselves at once to the voluntary sacrifice of conquest and ambition.

Upon the sole condition of recovering their children, Hippias and his partisans consented to surrender the citadel, and quit the territories of Attica within five days. Thus, in the fourth
B.C. 510. year from the death of Hipparchus, and about fifty years after the first establishment of the tyranny under its brilliant founder, the dominion of Athens passed away from the House of Pisistratus.

V. The party of Hippias, defeated, not by the swords of the enemy, but by the soft impulses of nature, took their way across the stream of the immemorial Scamander, and sought refuge at Sigeum, still under the government of Hegesistratus, the natural brother of the exiled prince.

The instant the pressure of one supreme power was removed, the two parties embodying the aristocratic and popular principles, rose into active life. The state was to be a republic, but of what denomination? The nobles naturally aspired to the predominance—at their head was the Eupatrid Isagoras; the strife of party always tends to produce popular results, even from elements apparently the most hostile. Clisthenes, the head of the Alcmæonidæ, was by birth even

yet more illustrious than Isagoras; for amongst the nobles, the Alcmæonid family stood pre-eminent. But unable to attain the sole power of the government, Clisthenes and his party were unwilling to yield to the more numerous faction of an equal. The exile and sufferings of the Alcmæonids had, no doubt, secured to them much of the popular compassion; their gallant struggles against, their ultimate victory over, the usurper, obtained the popular enthusiasm; thus it is probable, that an almost insensible sympathy had sprung up between this high-born faction and the people at large; and when, unable to cope with the party of the nobles, Clisthenes attached himself to the movement of the commons, the enemy of the tyrant appeared in his natural position—at the head of the democracy. Clisthenes was, however, rather the statesman of a party than the legislator for a people—it was his object permanently to break up the power of the great proprietors, not as enemies of the commonwealth, but as rivals to his faction. The surest way to diminish the influence of property in elections is so to alter the constituencies as to remove the electors from the immediate control of individual proprietors. Under the old Ionic and hereditary divisions of four tribes, many ancient associations and ties between the poorer and the nobler

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classes were necessarily formed. By one bold innovation, the whole importance of which was not immediately apparent, Clisthenes abolished these venerable divisions, and by a new geographical survey, created ten tribes instead of the former four. These were again subdivided into districts, or demes; the number seems to have varied, but at the earliest period they were not less than one hundred—at a later period they exceeded one hundred and seventy. To these demes were transferred all the political rights and privileges of the divisions they supplanted. Each had a local magistrate and local assemblies. Like corporations, these petty courts of legislature ripened the moral spirit of democracy while fitting men for the exercise of the larger rights they demanded. A consequence of the alteration of the number of the tribes was an increase in the number that composed the senate, which now rose from four to five hundred members.

Clisthenes did not limit himself to this change in the constituent bodies—he increased the total number of the constituents: new citizens were made—aliens were admitted—and it is supposed by some, though upon rather vague authorities, that several slaves were enfranchised. It was not enough, however, to augment the number of the people, it was equally neces-

sary to prevent the ascension of a single man. Encouraged by the example in other states of Greece, forewarned by the tyranny of Pisistratus, Clisthenes introduced the institution of the Ostracism.* Probably about the same period, the mode of election to public offices generally was altered from the public vote to the secret lot.† It is evident that these changes, whether salutary or pernicious, were not wanton or uncalled for. The previous constitution had not sufficed to protect the republic from a tyranny; something deficient in the machinery of Solon's legislation had for half a century frustrated its practical intentions. A change was, therefore, necessary to the existence of the Free State; and the care with which that change was directed towards the diminution of the aristocratic influence, is in itself a proof that such influence had been the shelter of the defeated tyranny. The Athenians themselves always considered the innovations of Clisthenes but as

* Ælian. V. Hist. xiii. 24.

† Wachsm, i. l. § 273. Others contend for a later date to this most important change; but, on the whole, it seems a necessary consequence of the innovations of Clisthenes, which were all modelled upon the one great system of breaking down the influence of the aristocracy. In the speech of Otanes, (Herod. lib. iii. c. 80,) it is curious to observe how much the vote by lot was identified with a republican form of government.

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the natural developement of the popular institutions of Solon; and that decisive and energetic noble seems indeed to have been one of those rude but serviceable instruments by which a more practical and perfect action is often wrought out from the incompleted theories of greater statesmen.

VI. Meanwhile, Isagoras, thus defeated by his rival, had the mean ambition to appeal to the Spartan sword. Ancient scandal attributes to Cleomenes, king of Sparta, an improper connexion with the wife of Isagoras, and every one knows that the fondest friend of the cuckold is invariably the adulterer;—the national policy of founding aristocracies was doubtless, however, a graver motive with the Spartan king than his desire to assist Isagoras. Cleomenes by a public herald proclaimed the expulsion of Clisthenes, upon a frivolous pretence that the Alcmæonidæ were still polluted by the hereditary sacrilege of Cylon. Clisthenes privately retired from the city, and the Spartan king, at the head of an inconsiderable troop, re-entered Athens—expelled, at the instance of Isagoras, seven hundred Athenian families, as inculpated in the pretended pollution of Clisthenes—dissolved the senate—and committed all the offices of the state to an oligarchy of three hundred, (a number and a council founded upon the Dorian habits,) each of whom was the creature of Isa-

goras. But the noble assembly he had thus violently dissolved refused obedience to his commands; they appealed to the people, whom the valour of liberty simultaneously aroused, and the citadel, of which Isagoras and the Spartans instantly possessed themselves, was besieged by the whole power of Athens. The conspirators held out only two days; on the third, they accepted the conditions of the besiegers, and departed peaceably from the city. Some of the Athenians, who had shared the treason without participating in the flight, were justly executed. Clisthenes, with the families expelled by Cleomenes, was recalled, and the Republic of Athens was thus happily re-established.

VII. But the iron vengeance of that nation of soldiers, thus far successfully braved, was not to be foreboded without alarm by the Athenians. They felt that Cleomenes had only abandoned his designs, to return to them more prepared for contest; and Athens was not yet in a condition to brave the determined and never-sparing energies of Sparta. The Athenians looked around the states of Greece—many in alliance with Lacedæmon—some governed by tyrants—others distracted with their own civil dissensions;—there were none from whom the new commonwealth could hope for a sufficient assistance against the

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revenge of Cleomenes. In this dilemma, they resorted to the only aid which suggested itself, and sought, across the boundaries of Greece, the alliance of the barbarians. They adventured a formal embassy to Artaphernes, Satrap of Sardis, to engage the succour of Darius, king of Persia.

Accompanying the Athenians in this mission, full of interest, for it was the first public transaction between that republic and the throne of Persia, I pause to take a rapid survey of the origin of that mighty empire, whose destinies became thenceforth involved in the history of Grecian misfortunes and Grecian fame. That survey commences with the foundation of the Lydian monarchy.

VIII. Amidst the Grecian colonies of Asia whose rise we have commemorated, around and above a hill commanding spacious and fertile plains watered by the streams of the Cayster and Mæander, an ancient Pelasgic tribe, called the Mæonians, had established their abode. According to Herodotus, these settlers early obtained the name of Lydians, from Lydus, the son of Atys. The Dorian revolution did not spare these delightful seats; and an Heraclid dynasty is said to have reigned five hundred years over the Mæonians; these in their turn were supplanted by a race known to us as the

Mermnadæ, the founder of whom, Gyges, murdered and dethroned the last of the Heraclidæ; and with a new dynasty seems to have commenced a new and less Asiatic policy. Gyges, supported by the oracle of Delphi, was the first barbarian, except one of the many Phrygian kings claiming the name of Midas, who made votive offerings to that Grecian shrine. From his time this motley tribe, the link between Hellas and the East, came into frequent collision with the Grecian colonies. Gyges himself made war with Miletus and Smyrna, and even captured Colophon. With Miletus, indeed, the hostility of the Lydians became hereditary, and was renewed with various success by the descendants of Gyges, until, in the time of his great-grandson Alyattes, a war of twelve years with that splendid colony was terminated by a solemn peace and a strict alliance. Meanwhile, the petty but warlike monarchy founded by Gyges had preserved the Asiatic Greeks from dangers yet more formidable than its own ambition. From a remote period, savage and ferocious tribes, among which are pre-eminent the Treres and Cimmerians, had often ravaged the inland plains—now for plunder, now for settlement. Magnesia had been entirely destroyed by the Treres—even Sardis, the capital of the Mermnadæ, had been taken,

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save the citadel, by the Cimmerians. It was reserved for Alyattes to terminate these formidable irruptions, and Asia was finally delivered by his arms from a people in whom modern erudition has too fondly traced the ancestors of the Cymry, or Ancient Britons.* To this enterprising and able king succeeded a yet more illustrious monarch, who ought to have found in his genius the fame he has derived from his misfortunes. At the age of thirty-five, Crœsus ascended the Lydian throne. Before associated in the government with his father, he had rendered himself distinguished in military service; and, wise, accomplished, but grasping and ambitious, this remarkable monarch now completed the designs of his predecessors. Commencing with Ephesus, he succeeded in rendering tributary every Grecian colony on the western coast of Asia; and, leaving to each state its previous institutions, he kept by moderation what he obtained by force.

Crœsus was about to construct a fleet for the purpose of adding to his dominions the isles of the Ægæan, but is said to have been dissuaded from his purpose by a profound witticism of one of the seven wise men of Greece. "The islanders," said the sage," are about to storm you in your capital of Sardis, with ten thou-

* See Sharon Turner, vol. i. book i.

sand cavalry."—"Nothing could gratify me more," said the king, "than to see the islanders invading the Lydian continent with horsemen." "Right," replied the wise man, "and it will give the islanders equal satisfaction to find the Lydians attacking them by a fleet. To revenge their disasters on the land, the Greeks desire nothing better than to meet you on the ocean." The answer enlightened the king, and instead of fitting out his fleet, he entered into amicable alliance with the Ionians of the isles.* But his ambition was only thwarted in one direction to strike its roots in another; and he turned his invading arms against his neighbours on the continent, until he had progressively subdued nearly all the nations, save the Lycians and Cilicians, westward to the Halys. And thus rapidly and majestically rose from the scanty tribe and limited territory of the old Mæonians, the Monarchy of Asia Minor.

IX. The renown of Crœsus established, his capital of Sardis became the resort of the wise and the adventurous, whether of Asia or of Greece. In many respects the Lydians so closely resembled the Greeks as to suggest the affinity which historical evidence scarcely suffices to permit us absolutely to affirm. The manners and the customs of either people did not greatly

* Herod. b. i. c. xxvi.

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differ, save that with the Lydians, as still throughout the East, but little consideration was attached to women;—they were alike in their cultivation of the arts, and their respect for the oracles of religion—and Delphi, in especial, was inordinately enriched by the prodigal superstition of the Lydian kings.

The tradition which ascribes to the Lydians the invention of coined money is a proof of their commercial habits. The neighbouring Tmolus teemed with gold, which the waters of the Pactolus bore into the very streets of the city. Their industry was exercised in the manufacture of articles of luxury rather than those of necessity. Their purple garments—their skill in the workmanship of metals—their marts for slaves and eunuchs—their export trade of unwrought gold—are sufficient evidence both of the extent and the character of their civilization. Yet the nature of the Oriental government did not fail to operate injuriously on the more homely and useful directions of their energy. They appear never to have worked the gold mines, whose particles were borne to them by the careless bounty of the Pactolus. Their early traditional colonies were wafted on Grecian vessels. The gorgeous presents, with which they enriched the Hellenic temples, seem to have been fabricated by Grecian art, and even the advantages

of commerce they seem rather to have suffered, than to have sought. But what a people, so suddenly risen into splendour, governed by a wise prince, and stimulated perhaps to eventual liberty by the example of the European Greeks, ought to have become, it is impossible to conjecture;—perhaps the Hellenes of the East.

At this period, however, of such power and such promise, the fall of the Lydian empire was decreed. Far from the fertile fields and gorgeous capital of Lydia, amidst sterile mountains, inhabited by a simple and hardy race, rose the portentous star of the Persian Cyrus.

X. A victim to that luxury which confirms a free, but destroys a despotic, state, the vast foundations of the Assyrian empire were crumbling into decay, when a new monarchy, destined to become its successor, sprung up amongst one of its subject nations. Divided into various tribes, each dependant upon the Assyrian sceptre, was a warlike, wandering, and primitive race, known to us under the name of Medes. Deioces, a chief of one of the tribes, succeeded in uniting these scattered sections into a single people, built a city, and founded an independent throne. His son, Phraortes, reduced the Persians to his yoke—overran Asia—advanced to Nineveh—and ultimately perished in battle with

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a considerable portion of his army. Succeeded by his son Cyaxares, that monarch consummated the ambitious designs of his predecessors. He organized the miscellaneous hordes that compose an Oriental army into efficient and formidable discipline, vanquished the Assyrians, and besieged Nineveh, when a mighty irruption of the Scythian hordes called his attention homeward. A defeat which at one blow robbed this great king of the dominion of Asia, was ultimately recovered by a treacherous massacre of the Scythian leaders. The Medes regained their power

B.C. 606.

and prosecuted their conquests—Nineveh fell—and through the whole Assyrian realm, Babylon alone remained unsubjugated by the Mede. To this new-built and wide-spread empire succeeded Astyages, son of the fortunate Cyaxares. But, it is the usual character of a conquering tribe to adopt the habits and be corrupted by the vices of the subdued nations amongst which the invaders settle; and the peaceful reign of Astyages sufficed to enervate that vigilant and warlike spirit in the victor race, by which alone the vast empires of the East can be preserved from their natural tendency to decay. The Persians, subdued by the grandsire of Astyages, seized the occasion to revolt. Amongst them rose up a native hero, the Gengis-khan of the ancient world. Through the fables which obscure

his history we may be allowed to conjecture, that Cyrus, or Khosroo, was perhaps connected by blood with Astyages, and, more probably, that he was entrusted with command amongst the Persians by that weak and slothful monarch. Be that as it may, he succeeded in uniting under his banners a martial and uncorrupted population, overthrew the Median monarchy, and transferred to a dynasty, already worn out with premature old age, the vigorous and aspiring youth of a mountain-race. Such was the formidable foe that now menaced the rising glories of the Lydian king.

XI. Crœsus was allied by blood with the dethroned Astyages, and individual resentment at the overthrow of his relation co-operated with his anxious fears of the ambition of the victor. A less sagacious prince might easily have foreseen that the Persians would scarcely be secure in their new possessions, ere the wealth and domains of Lydia would tempt the restless cupidity of their chief. After much deliberation, as to the course to be pursued, Crœsus resorted for advice to the most celebrated oracles of Greece, and even to that of the Libyan Ammon. The answer he received from Delphi flattered, more fatally than the rest, the inclinations of the king. He was informed "that if he prosecuted a war with Persia a mighty empire would be over-

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thrown, and he was advised to seek the alliance of the most powerful states of Greece." Overjoyed with a response to which his hopes gave but one interpretation, the king prodigalized fresh presents on the Delphians, and received from them in return, for his people and himself, the honour of priority above all other nations in consulting the oracle, a distinguished seat in the temple, and the right of the citizenship of Delphi. Once more the fated monarch sought the oracle, and demanded if his power should ever fail. Thus replied the Pythian:—"When a mule shall sit enthroned over the Medes, fly, soft Lydian, across the pebbly waters of the Hermus." The ingenuity of Crœsus could discover in this reply no reason for alarm, confident that a mule could never be the sovereign of the Medes. Thus animated, and led on, the son of Alyattes prepared to oppose, while it was yet time, the progress of the Persian arms. He collected all the force he could summon from his provinces—crossed the Halys—entered Cappadocia—devastated the surrounding country—destroyed several towns—and finally met on the plains of Pteria the Persian army. The victory was undecided; but Crœsus, not satisfied with the force he led, which was inferior to that of Cyrus, returned to Sardis, dispatched envoys for succour into Egypt and

to Babylon, and disbanded, for the present, the disciplined mercenaries whom he had conducted into Cappadocia. But Cyrus was aware of the movements of the enemy, and by forced and rapid marches arrived at Sardis, and encamped before its walls. His army dismissed—his allies scarcely reached by his ambassadors—Crœsus yet showed himself equal to the peril of his fortune. His Lydians were amongst the most valiant of the Asiatic nations—dexterous in their national weapon, the spear, and renowned for the skill and prowess of their cavalry.

XII. In a wide plain, in the very neighbourhood of the royal Sardis, and watered "by the pebbly stream of the Hermus," the cavalry of Lydia met, and were routed by, the force of Cyrus. The city was besieged and taken, and the wisest and wealthiest of the Eastern kings sunk thenceforth into a petty vassal, consigned as guest or prisoner to a Median city near Ecbatana.* The prophecy was fulfilled, and a mighty empire overthrown.†

* Ctesias. Mr. Thirlwall, in my judgment, very properly contents himself with recording the ultimate destination of Crœsus as we find it in Ctesias, to the rejection of the beautiful romance of Herodotus. Justin observes that Crœsus was so beloved among the Grecian cities that had Cyrus exercised any cruelty against him, the Persian hero would have drawn upon himself a war with Greece.

† After his fall, Crœsus is said by Herodotus to have re-

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The Grecian colonies of Asia, during the Lydian war, had resisted the overtures of Cyrus, and continued faithful to Crœsus ; they had now cause to dread the vengeance of the conqueror. The Ionians and Æolians sent to demand the assistance of Lacedæmon, pledged equally with themselves to the Lydian cause. But the Spartans, yet more cautious than courageous, saw but little profit in so unequal an alliance. They peremptorily refused the offer of the colonists, but, after their departure, warily sent a vessel of fifty oars to

proached the Pythian with those treacherous oracles that conduced to the loss of his throne, and to have demanded if the gods of Greece were usually delusive and ungrateful. True to that dark article of Grecian faith which punished remote generations for ancestral crimes, the Pythian replied, that Crœsus had been fated to expiate in his own person the crimes of Gyges, the murderer of his master ;— that, for the rest, the declarations of the oracle had been verified ; the mighty empire, denounced by the divine voice, had been destroyed, for it was his own, and the mule, Cyrus, was presiding over the Lydian realm : a mule might the Persian hero justly be entitled, since his parents were of different ranks and nations. His father a low-born Persian— his mother a Median princess.—Herodotus assures us that Crœsus was content with the explanation—if so, the God of Song was more fortunate than the earthly poets he inspires, who have indeed often, imitating his example, sacrificed their friends to a play upon words, without being so easily able to satisfy their victims.

watch the proceedings of Cyrus, and finally deputed Lacrines, a Spartan of distinction, to inform the monarch of the Persian, Median, and Lydian empires, that any injury to the Grecian cities would be resented by the Spartans. Cyrus asked with polite astonishment of the Greeks about him, "Who these Spartans were?" and having ascertained as much as he could comprehend concerning their military force and their social habits, replied, "That men who had a large space in the middle of their city for the purpose of cheating one another, could not be to him an object of terror:" so little respect had the hardy warrior for the decent frauds of oratory and of trade. Meanwhile, he obligingly added, "that if he continued in health, their concern for the Ionian troubles might possibly be merged in the greatness of their own." Soon afterwards Cyrus swept onwards in the prosecution of his vast design[redacted]running Assyria, and rushing through the channels of Euphrates into the palaces of Babylon, and the halls of the scriptural Belshazzar. His son, Cambyses, added the mystic Egypt to the vast conquests of Cyrus—and a stranger to the blood of the great victor, by means of superstitious accident or political intrigue, ascended the throne of Asia, known to

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European history under the name of Darius. The generals of Cyrus had reduced to the Persian yoke the Ionian colonies; the Isle of Samos, (the first of the isles subjected,) was afterwards conquered by a satrap of Sardis, and Darius, who, impelled by the ambition of his predecessors, had led with no similar success a vast armament against the wandering Scythians, added, on his return, Lesbos, Chios, and other isles in the Ægæan, to the new monarchy of the world. As in the often analogous history of Italian republics, we find in every incursion of the German emperor that some crafty noble of a free state joined the banner of a Frederic or a Henry in the hope of receiving from the imperial favour the tyranny of his own city—so there had not been wanting in the Grecian colonies men of boldness and ambition, who flocked to the Persian standard, and in gratitude for their services against the Scythian, were rewarded with the supreme government of their [redacted] cities. Thus was raised Coes, a private citizen, to the tyranny of Mitylene—and thus Histiæus, already possessing, was confirmed by Darius in, that of Miletus. Meanwhile Megabazus, a general of the Persian monarch, at the head of an army of eighty thousand men, subdued Thrace, and made Macedonia tributary to the Persian throne.

Having now established, as he deemed securely, the affairs of the empire in Asia Minor, Darius placed his brother Artaphernes in the powerful satrapy of Sardis, and returned to his capital of Susa.

XIII. To this satrap, brother of that mighty monarch, came the ambassadors of Athens. Let us cast our eyes along the map of the ancient world—and survey the vast circumference of the Persian realm, stretching almost over the civilized globe. To the east no boundary was visible before the Indus. To the north the empire extended to the Caspian and the Euxine seas, with that steep Caucasian range, never passed even by the most daring of the early Asiatic conquerors. Eastward of the Caspian, the rivers of Oxus and Iaxartes divided the subjects of the Great King from the ravages of the Tartar; the Arabian peninsula interposed its burning sands, a barrier to the south—while the western territories of the empire, including Syria, Phœnicia, the fertile satrapies of Asia Minor, were washed by the Mediterranean seas. Suddenly turning from this immense empire, let us next endeavour to discover those dominions from which the Athenian ambassadors were deputed: far down in a remote corner of the earth we perceive at last the scarce

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visible nook of Attica, with its capital of Athens —a domain that in its extremest length measured sixty geographical miles! We may now judge of the condescending wonder with which the brother of Darius listened to the ambassadors of a people, by whose glory alone his name is transmitted to posterity. Yet was there nothing unnatural or unduly arrogant in his reply. "Send Darius," said the satrap affably, "earth and water, (the accustomed symbols of homage,) and he will accept your alliance." The ambassadors deliberated, and impressed by the might of Persia, and the sense of their own unfriended condition, they accepted the proposals.

If, fresh from our survey of the immeasurable disparity of power between the two states, we cannot but allow the answer of the satrap was such as might be expected, it is not without a thrill of sympathy and admiration we learn, that no sooner had the ambassadors returned to Athens, than they received from the handful of its citizens a severe reprimand for their submission. Indignant at the proposal of the satrap, that brave people recurred no more to the thought of the alliance. In haughty patience, unassisted and alone, they awaited the burst of the tempest which they foresaw.

XIV. Meanwhile, Cleomenes, chafed at the

failure of his attempt on the Athenian liberties, and conceiving, in the true spirit of injustice, that he had been rather the aggrieved than the aggressor,* levied forces in different parts of the Peloponnesus, but without divulging the object he had in view. That object was two-fold—vengeance upon Athens, and the restoration of Isagoras. At length he threw off the mask, and at the head of a considerable force seized upon the holy city of Eleusis. Simultaneously, and in concert with the Spartan, the Bœotians forcibly took possession of Œnoe and Hysiæ—two towns on the extremity of Attica; while from Chalcis, (the principal city of the isle of Eubœa which fronted the Attic coast,) a formidable band ravaged the Athenian territories. Threatened by this three-fold invasion, the measures of the Athenians were prompt and vigorous. They left for the present unavenged the incursions of the Bœotians and Chalcidians, and marched with all the force they could collect against Cleomenes at Eleusis. The two armies were prepared for battle, when a sudden revolution in the Spartan camp delivered the Athenians from the most powerful of their foes. The Corinthians, ensnared by Cleomenes into measures,

* Herod. l. v. c. 74.

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of the object of which they had first been ignorant, abruptly retired from the field. Immediately afterwards a dissension broke out between Cleomenes and Demaratus, the other king of Sparta, who had hitherto supported his colleague in all his designs, and Demaratus hastily quitted Eleusis, and returned to Lacedæmon. At this disunion between the kings of Sparta, accompanied, as it was, by the secession of the Corinthians, the other confederates broke up the camp, returned home, and left Cleomenes with so scanty a force that he was compelled to forego his resentment and his vengeance, and retreat from the sacred city. The Athenians now turned their arms against the Chalcidians, who had retired to Eubœa; but encountering the Bœotians, who were on their march to assist their island ally, they engaged, and defeated them with a considerable slaughter. Flushed by their victory, the Athenians rested not upon their arms—on the same day they crossed that narrow strait which divided them from Eubœa, and obtained a second and equally signal victory over the Chalcidians. There they confirmed their conquest by the establishment of four thousand colonists* in the fertile

* If colonists they can properly be called—they retained their connexion with Athens, and all their rights of franchise.

meadows of Eubœa, which had been dedicated by the islanders to the pasturage of their horses. The Athenians returned in triumph to their city. At the price of two minæ each, their numerous prisoners were ransomed, and the captive chains suspended from the walls of the citadel. A tenth part of the general ransom was consecrated, and applied to the purchase of a brazen chariot, placed in the entrance of the citadel, with an inscription which dedicated it to the tutelary goddess of Athens.

"Not from the example of the Athenians only," proceeds the father of history, "but from universal experience, do we learn that an equal form of government is the best. While in subjection to tyrants the Athenians excelled in war none of their neighbours—delivered from the oppressor, they excelled them all;—an evident proof that, controlled by one man they exerted themselves feebly, because exertion was for a master; regaining liberty, each man was made zealous, because his zeal was for himself, and his individual interest was the common weal." *—Venerable praise and accurate distinction!†

* Herod. l. v. c. 78.

† Mr. Mitford, constantly endeavouring to pervert the

XV. The Bœotians, resentful of their defeat, sent to the Pythian oracle to demand the best means of obtaining revenge. The Pythian recommended an alliance with their nearest neighbours. The Bœotians, who, although the inspiring Helicon hallowed their domain, were esteemed but a dull and obtuse race, interpreted this response in favour of the people of the rocky island of Ægina—certainly not their nearest neighbours, if the question were to be settled by geographers. The wealthy inhabitants of that illustrious isle, which, rising above that part of the Ægæan called Sinus Saronicus, we may yet behold in a clear sky from the heights of Phyle, had long entertained a hatred against the Athenians. They willingly embraced the proffered alliance of the Bœotians, and the two states ravaged in concert the coast of Attiça. While the Athenians were preparing to avenge the aggression, they received a warning from the Delphic oracle, enjoining them to refrain from all hostilities with the people of Ægina for thirty years, at the termination of which period they were to erect a fane to Æacus, (the son of Jupiter, from whom,

simple honesty of Herodotus to a sanction of despotic governments, carefully slurs over this remarkable passage.

according to tradition, the island had received its name,) and then they might commence war with success. The Athenians, on hearing the response, forestalled the time specified by the oracle by erecting at once a temple to Æacus in their forum. After-circumstances did not allow them to delay to the end of thirty years the prosecution of the war. Meanwhile, the unsleeping wrath of their old enemy, Cleomenes, demanded their full attention. In the character of that fierce and restless Spartan, we recognize from the commencement of his career the taint of that insanity to which he subsequently fell a victim.* In his earlier life, in a war with the Argives, he had burnt five thousand fugitives by setting fire to the grove whither they had fled—an act of flagrant impiety, no less than of ferocious cruelty, according to the tender superstition of the Greeks. During his occupation of Eleusis, he wantonly violated the mysterious sanctuary of Orgas—the place above all others most consecrated to the Eleusinian gods. His actions and enterprises were invariably inconsistent and vague. He enters Athens to restore her liberties—joins with Isagoras to destroy them; engages in an attempt to revolutionize that energetic state with-

* Pausanias, b. iii. c. 5 and 6.

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out any adequate preparation—seizes the citadel to-day to quit it disgracefully to-morrow; invades Eleusis with an army he cannot keep together, and, in the ludicrous cunning common to the insane, disguises from his allies the very enemy against whom they are to fight, in order, as common sense might have expected, to be deserted by them in the instant of battle. And now, prosecuting still farther the contradictory tenor of his conduct, he who had driven Hippias from Athens persuades the Spartan assembly to restore the very tyrant the Spartan arms had expelled. In order to stimulate the fears of his countrymen, Cleomenes* asserted, that he had discovered in the Athenian citadel certain oracular predictions, till then unknown, foreboding to the Spartans many dark and strange calamities from the hands of the Athenians.† The astute people whom the king addressed were

* Mr. Mitford, always unduly partial to the Spartan policy, styles Cleomenes, "a man violent in his temper, but of considerable abilities." There is no evidence of his abilities. His restlessness and ferocity made him assume a prominent part which he was never adequate to fulfil: he was, at best, a cunning madman.

† Why, if discovered so long since by Cleomenes, were they concealed till now? The Spartan prince, afterwards detected in bribing the oracle itself, perhaps forged these oracular predictions.

more moved by political interests than religious warnings. They observed that when oppressed by tyranny the Athenians had been weak and servile, but if admitted to the advantages of liberty, would soon grow to a power equal to their own :* And in the restoration of a tyrant, their sagacity foreboded the depression of a rival.

XVI. Hippias, who had hitherto resided with his half-brother at Sigeum, was invited to Lacedæmon. He arrived the Spartans assembled the ambassadors of their various tribes—and in full council thus spoke the policy of Sparta.

"Friends and allies, we acknowledge that we have erred; misled by deceiving oracles, we have banished from Athens men united to us by ancient hospitality. We restored a republican government to an ungrateful people, who, forgetful that to us they owed their liberty, expelled from amongst them our subjects and our king. Every day they exhibit a fiercer spirit—proofs of which have been already experienced by the Bœotians, the Chalcidians, and may speedily extend to others, unless they take in time wise and salutary precautions. We have erred—we are prepared to atone for our fault,

* Herod. b. v. c. 91.

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and to aid you in the chastisement of the Athenians. With this intention we have summoned Hippias and yourselves, that by common council and united arms we may restore to the son of Pisistratus the dominion and the dignity of which we have deprived him."

The sentiments of the Spartans received but little favour in the assembly. After a dead and chilling silence, up rose Sosicles, the ambassador for Corinth, whose noble reply reveals to us the true cause of the secession of the Corinthians at Eleusis.

"We may expect," said he, with indignant eloquence, "to see the earth take the place of heaven, since you, O Spartans, meditate the subversion of equal laws and the restoration of tyrannical governments—a design than which nothing can be more unjust, nothing more wicked. If you think it well that states should be governed by tyrants, Spartans, before you establish tyranny for others, establish it amongst yourselves! You act unworthily with your allies. You, who so carefully guard against the intrusion of tyranny in Sparta—had you known it as we have done, you would be better sensible of the calamities it entails: listen to some of its effects." (Here the ambassador related at length the cruelties of Periander, the

tyrant of Corinth.) "Such," said he, in conclusion, "such is a tyrannical government—such its effects. Great was our marvel when we learnt that it was you, O Spartans, who had sent for Hippias,—at your sentiments we marvel more. Oh! by the gods, the celestial guardians of Greece, we adjure you not to build up tyrannies in our cities. If you persevere in your purpose—if, against all justice, you attempt the restoration of Hippias, know, at least, that the Corinthians will never sanction your designs." BOOK II. CHAP. III.

It was in vain that Hippias, despite his own ability, despite the approval of the Spartans, endeavoured to counteract the impression of this stern harangue,—in vain he relied on the declarations of the oracles,—in vain appealed to the jealousy of the Corinthians, and assured them of the ambition of Athens. The confederates with one accord sympathized with the sentiments of Sosicles, and adjured the Spartans to sanction no innovations prejudicial to the liberties of a single city of Greece.

XVII. The failure of propositions so openly made, is a fresh proof of the rash and unthinking character of Cleomenes—eager as usual for all designs, and prepared for none. The Spartans abandoned their design, and Hippias, discomfited but not dispirited, quitted the Lace-

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dæmonian capital. Some of the chiefs of Thessaly, as well as the prince of Macedon, offered him an honourable retreat in their dominions. But it was not an asylum, it was an ally, that the unyielding ambition of Hippias desired to secure. He regained Sigeum, and thence, departing to Sardis, sought the assistance of the satrap, Artaphernes. He who in prosperity was the tyrant, became, in adversity, the traitor of his country; and the son of Pisistratus exerted every effort of his hereditary talent of persuasion to induce the satrap not so much to restore the usurper, as to reduce the Athenian republic to the Persian yoke.* The arrival and the intrigues of this formidable guest at the court of Sardis soon reached the ears of the vigilant Athenians; they sent to Artaphernes, exhort-

* What is the language of Mr. Mitford at this treason? "We have seen," says that historian, "the democracy of Athens itself setting the example (among the states of old Greece) of soliciting Persian protection. Will, then, the liberal spirit of patriotism and equal government *justify the prejudices of Athenian faction* (*!!!*) and doom Hippias to peculiar execration, because, at length, he also, with many of his fellow-citizens, despairing of other means for ever returning to their native country, applied to Artaphernes at Sardis?" It is difficult to know which to admire most, the stupidity or dishonesty of this passage. The Athenian democracy applied to Persia for relief against the unjust invasion of their city and liber-

ing him not to place confidence in those whose offences had banished them from Athens. "If you wish for peace," returned the satrap, "recall Hippias." Rather than accede to this condition, that brave people, in their petty share of the extremity of Greece, chose to be deemed the enemies of the vast monarchy of Persia.*

ties by a foreign force; Hippias applied to Persia, not only to interfere in the domestic affairs of a free state, but to reduce that state, his native city, to the subjection of the satrap. Is there any parallel between these cases? if not, what dullness in instituting it! But the dishonesty is equal to the dullness. Herodotus, the only author Mr. Mitford here follows, expressly declares, (l. v. c. 96,) that Hippias sought to induce Artaphernes to subject Athens to the sway of the satrap and his master, Darius; yet Mr. Mitford says not a syllable of this, leaving his reader to suppose that Hippias merely sought to be restored to his country through the intercession of the satrap.

* Herod. l. v. c. 96.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTIÆUS, TYRANT OF MILETUS, REMOVED TO PERSIA—THE GOVERNMENT OF THAT CITY DEPUTED TO ARISTAGORAS, WHO INVADES NAXOS WITH THE AID OF THE PERSIANS—ILL SUCCESS OF THAT EXPEDITION—ARISTAGORAS RESOLVES UPON REVOLTING FROM THE PERSIANS—REPAIRS TO SPARTA AND TO ATHENS—THE ATHENIANS AND ERETRIANS INDUCED TO ASSIST THE IONIANS—BURNING OF SARDIS—THE IONIAN WAR—THE FATE OF ARISTAGORAS—NAVAL BATTLE OF LADE—FALL OF MILETUS—REDUCTION OF IONIA—MILTIADES—HIS CHARACTER—MARDONIUS REPLACES ARTAPHERNES IN THE LYDIAN SATRAPY—HOSTILITIES BETWEEN ÆGINA AND ATHENS—CONDUCT OF CLEOMENES—DEMARATUS DEPOSED—DEATH OF CLEOMENES—NEW PERSIAN EXPEDITION.

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I. We have seen that Darius rewarded with a tributary command the services of Grecian nobles during his Scythian expedition. The most remarkable of these deputy tyrants was Histiæus, the tyrant of Miletus. Possessed of that dignity prior to his connexion with Darius, he had received from the generosity of the monarch a tract of land near the river Strymon, in Thrace, sufficing for the erection of a city called Myrcinus. To his cousin, Aris-

tagoras, he committed the government of Miletus—repaired to his new possession, and employed himself actively in the foundations of a colony which promised to be one of the most powerful that Miletus had yet established. The site of the infant city was selected with admirable judgment upon a navigable river, in the vicinity of mines, and holding the key of commercial communication between the long chain of Thracian tribes, on the one side, and the trading enterprise of Grecian cities on the other. Histiæus was describing the walls with which the ancient cities were surrounded, when Megabazus, commander of the forces intended to consummate the conquest of Thrace, had the sagacity to warn the Persian king, then at Sardis, of the probable effects of the regal donation. "Have you, sire, done wisely," said he, "in permitting this able and active Greek to erect a new city in Thrace? Know you not that that favoured land, abounding in mines of silver, possesses, also, every advantage for the construction and equipment of ships; wild Greeks and roving barbarians are mingled there, ripe for enterprise—ready to execute the commands of any resolute and aspiring leader? Fear the possibility of a civil war—prevent the chances of the ambition of Histiæus,—have recourse to artifice rather than

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to force,—get him in your power, and prevent his return to Greece."

Darius followed the advice of his general, sent for Histiæus, loaded him with compliments, and pretending that he could not live without his councils, carried him off from his Thracian settlement to the Persian capital of Susa. His kinsman, Aristagoras, continued to preside over the government of Miletus, then the most haughty and flourishing of the Ionian states; but Naxos, beneath it in power, surpassed it in wealth; the fertile soil of that fair isle—its numerous population—its convenient site—its abundant resources, attracted the cupidity of Aristagoras; he took advantage of a civil commotion, in which many of the nobles were banished by the people—received the exiles—and, under the pretence of restoring them, meditated the design of annexing the largest of the Cyclades to the tyranny of Miletus.

He persuaded the traitorous nobles to suffer him to treat with Artaphernes—successfully represented to that satrap the advantages of annexing the gem of the Cyclades to the Persian diadem—and Darius, listening to the advice of his delegate, sent two hundred vessels to the in-

B.C. 501. vasion of Naxos, under the command of his kinsman, Megabates. A quarrel ensued, how-

ever, between the Persian general and the governor of Miletus. Megabates, not powerful enough to crush the tyrant, secretly informed the Naxians of the meditated attack; and, thus prepared for the assault, they so well maintained themselves in their city, that after a siege of four months, the pecuniary resources, not only of Megabates, but of Aristagoras, were exhausted, and the invaders were compelled to retreat from the island. Aristagoras now saw that he had fallen into the pit he had digged for others: his treasury was drained—he had incurred heavy debts with the Persian government, which condemned him to reimburse the whole expense of the enterprise—he feared the resentment of Megabates and the disappointment of Artaphernes—and he foresaw that his ill-success might be a reasonable plea for removing him from the government of Miletus. While he himself was meditating the desperate expedient of a revolt, a secret messenger from Histiæus suddenly arrived at Miletus. That wily Greek, disgusted with his magnificent captivity, had had recourse to a singular expedient: selecting the most faithful of his slaves, he shaved his skull, wrote certain characters on the surface, and when the hair was again grown, dismissed this living letter to Aristagoras.* The characters com-

* Aulus Gellius, who relates this anecdote with more de-

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manded the deputy to commence a revolt; for Histiæus imagined that the quiet of Miletus was the sentence of his exile.

II. This seasonable advice, so accordant with his own views, charmed Aristagoras: he summoned the Milesians, and to engage their zealous assistance, he divested himself of the tyranny, and established a republic. It was a mighty epoch that, for the stir of thought!—everywhere, had awakened a desire for free government and equal laws; and Aristagoras, desirous of conciliating the rest of Iónia, assisted her various states in the establishment of republican institutions. Coës, the tyrant of Mitylene, perished by the hands of the people; in the rest of Ionia, the tyrants were punished but by exile. Thus, a spark kindled the universal train already prepared in thought, and the selfish ambition of Aristagoras forwarded the march of a revolution in favour of liberty that embraced all the cities of Ionia. But Aristagoras, evidently a man of a profound, though tortuous policy,

tail than Herodotus, asserts that the slave himself was ignorant of the characters written on his skull, that Histiæus selected a domestic who had a disease in his eyes—shaved him, punctured the skin, and sending him to Miletus when the hair was grown, assured the credulous patient that Aristagoras would complete the cure by shaving him a second time. According to this story we must rather admire the simplicity of the slave than the ingenuity of Histiæus.

was desirous of engaging not only the colonies of Greece, but the mother country also, in the great and perilous attempt to resist the Persian. High above all the states of the elder Greece soared the military fame of Sparta; and that people the scheming Milesian resolved first to persuade to his daring project.

Trusting to no ambassador, but to his own powers of eloquence, he arrived in person at Sparta. With a brazen chart of the world, as then known, in his hand, he sought to inspire the ambition of Cleomenes by pointing out the wide domains—the exhaustless treasures of the Persian realm. He depreciated the valour of its people, ridiculed their weapons, and urged him to the vast design of establishing, by Spartan valour, the magnificent conquest of Asia. The Spartans, always cold to the liberty of other states, were no less indifferent to the glory of barren victories; and when Aristagoras too honestly replied, in answer to a question of the king, that from the Ionian sea to Susa, the Persian capital, was a journey of three months, Cleomenes abruptly exclaimed, "Milesian, depart from Sparta before sunset;—a march of three months from the sea!—the Spartans will never listen to so frantic a proposal!" Aristagoras, not defeated, sought a subsequent interview, in

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which he attempted to bribe the king, who more accustomed to bribe others than be bribed, broke up the conference, and never afterwards would renew it.

III. The patient and plotting Milesian de-
B.C. 500. parted thence to Athens : he arrived there just at the moment when the Athenian ambassadors had returned from Sardis, charged with the haughty reply of Artaphernes to the mission concerning Hippias. The citizens were aroused, excited, inflamed ; equally indignant at the insolence, and fearful of the power, of the satrap. It was a favourable occasion for Aristagoras !

To the imagination of the reader this passage in history presents a striking picture. We may behold the great assembly of that lively, high-souled, sensitive, and inflammable people. There is the Agora ;—there the half-built temple to Æacus ;—above, the citadel, where yet hang the chains of the captive enemy ;—still linger in the ears of the populace, already vain of their prowess, and haughty in their freedom, the menace of the Persian—the words that threatened them with the restoration of the exiled tyrant ; and at this moment, and in this concourse, we see the subtle Milesian, wise in the experience of mankind, popular with all free states, from having restored freedom to the colo-

nies of Ionia—every advantage of foreign circumstance and intrinsic ability in his favour,—about to address the breathless and excited multitude. He rose: he painted, as he had done to Cleomenes, in lively colours, the wealth of Asia, the effeminate habits of its people—he described its armies fighting without spear or shield—he invoked the valour of a nation already successful in war against hardy and heroic foes—he appealed to old hereditary ties; the people of Miletus had been an Athenian colony—should not the parent protect the child in the greatest of all blessings—the right to liberty? Now he entreats—now he promises,—the sympathy of the free, the enthusiasm of the brave, are alike aroused. He succeeds: the people accede to his views. 'It is easier,' says the homely Herodotus, 'to gain (or delude) a multitude than an individual; and the eloquence which had failed with Cleomenes enlisted thirty thousand Athenians.'*

IV. The Athenians agreed to send to the succour of their own colonists, the Ionians, twenty vessels of war. Melanthius, a man of amiable character and popular influence, was

* Rather a hyperbolical expression—the total number of free Athenians did not exceed twenty thousand.

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appointed the chief. This was the true commencement of the great Persian war.

V. Thus successful, Aristagoras departed from Athens. Arriving at Miletus, he endeavoured yet more to assist his design, by attempting to arouse a certain colony in Phrygia, formed of Thracian captives * taken by Megabazus, the Persian general. A great proportion of these colonists seized the occasion to return to their native land—baffled the pursuit of the Persian horse—reached the shore—and were transported in Ionian vessels to their ancient home on the banks of the Strymon. Meanwhile, the Athenian vessels arrived at Miletus, joined by five ships, manned by Eretrians of Eubœa, mindful of former assistance from the Milesians in a war with their fellow islanders, the Chalcidians, nor conscious, perhaps, of the might of the enemy they provoked.

Aristagoras remained at Miletus, and delegated to his brother the command of the Milesian forces. The Greeks then sailed to Ephesus, debarked at Coressus in its vicinity, and under the conduct of Ephesian guides, marched along the winding valley of the Cayster—whose rapid course, under a barbarous name, the traveller yet traces, though the swans of the Grecian poets haunt its waves no more—passed over the

* The Pæonians.

auriferous Mount of Tmolus, verdant with the vine, and fragrant with the saffron—and arrived at the gates of the voluptuous Sardis. They found Artaphernes unprepared for this sudden invasion—they seized the city;—the satrap and his troops retreated to the citadel. B.C. 499.

The houses of Sardis were chiefly built of reeds, and the same slight and inflammable material thatched the roofs even of the few mansions built of brick. A house was set on fire by a soldier—the flames spread throughout the city. In the midst of the conflagration despair gave valour to the besieged—the wrath of man was less fearful than that of the element; the Lydians, and the Persians who were in the garrison, rushed into the market-place, through which flowed the river of Pactolus. There they resolved to encounter the enemy. The invaders were seized with a sudden panic, possibly as much occasioned by the rage of the conflagration as the desperation of the foe; and, retiring to Mount Tmolus, took advantage of the night to retrace their march along the valley of the Cayster.

VI. But the Ionians were not fated to return in safety: from the borders of the river Halys a troop of Persians followed their retreat, and overtaking them when the Ephesian territory

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was already gained, defeated the Ionians with a great slaughter, amidst which fell the leader of the Eretrians.

The Athenians were naturally disappointed with the result of this expedition. Returning home, they refused all the overtures of Aristagoras to renew their incursions into Asia. The gallant Ionians continued, however, the hostilities they had commenced against Darius. They sailed to the Hellespont, and reduced Byzantium, with the neighbouring cities. Their forces were joined by the Cyprians, aroused against the Persian yoke by Onesilus, a bold usurper, who had dethroned his brother, the prince of Salamis, in Cyprus; and the conflagration of Sardis dazzling the Carians, hitherto lukewarm, united to the Ionian cause the bulk of that hardy population. The revolt now assumed a menacing and formidable aspect. Informed of these events, Darius summoned Histiæus: "The man," said he, "whom you appointed to the government of Miletus has rebelled against me. Assisted by the Ionians, whom I shall unquestionably chastise, he has burnt Sardis. Had he your approbation? Without it would he have dared such treason? Beware how you offend a second time against my authority." Histiæus artfully vindicated

himself from the suspicions of the king. He attributed the revolt of the Ionians to his own absence, declared that if sent into Ionia he would soon restore its inhabitants to their wonted submission, and even promised to render the island of Sardinia tributary to Persia.

VII. Deluded by these professions, Darius dismissed the tyrant of Miletus, requiring only his return on the fulfilment of his promises. Meanwhile, the generals of Darius pressed vigorously on the insurgents. Against Onesilus, then engaged in reducing Amathus, (the single city in Cyprus opposed to him,) Artybius, a Persian officer, conducted a formidable fleet. The Ionians hastened to the succour of their Cyprian ally—a battle ensued both by land and sea;—in the latter the Ionians defeated, after a severe contest, the Phœnician auxiliaries of Persia—in the former, a treacherous desertion of some of the Cyprian troops gave a victory to the Persian. The brave Onesilus, who had set his fate upon the issue of the field, was amongst the slain. The Persians proceeded to blockade, and ultimately to regain, the Cyprian cities: of these, Soli, which withstood a siege of five months, proffered the most obdurate resistance: with the surrender of that gal-

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lant city, Cyprus once more, after a year of liberty, was subjected to the dominion of the Great King.

B.C. 498. This success was increased by the reduction of several towns on the Hellespont, and two signal defeats over the Carians, in the last of which, the Milesians, who had joined their ally, suffered a prodigious loss. The Carians, however, were not subdued, and in a subsequent engagement they effected a great slaughter amongst the Persians, the glory of which was enhanced by the death of Daurises, general of the barbarians, and son-in-law to Darius. But this action was not sufficiently decisive to arrest the progress of the Persian arms. Artaphernes, satrap of Sardis, and Otanes, the third general in command, led their forces into Ionia and Æolia:—the Ionian Clazomenæ, the Æolian Cuma, were speedily reduced.

VIII. The capture of these places, with the general fortunes of the war, disheartened even the patient and adventurous Aristagoras. He could not but believe that all attempts against the crushing power of Darius were in vain. He assembled the adherents yet faithful to his arms, and painted to them the necessity of providing a new settlement. Miletus was no longer secure, and the vengeance of Darius was gathering ra-

pidly around them. After some consultation they agreed to repair to that town and territory in Thrace which had been given by Darius to Histiæus.* Miletus was entrusted to the charge of a popular citizen named Pythagoras, and these hardy and restless adventurers embarked for Thrace. Aristagoras was fortunate enough to reach in safety the settlement which had seemed so formidable a possession to the Persian general; but his usual scheming and bold ambition, not contented with that domain, led him to the attack of a town in its vicinity. The inhabitants agreed to resign it into his hands, and probably lulled into security by this concession,

* Hecatæus, the historian of Miletus, opposed the retreat to Myrcinus, advising his countrymen rather to fortify themselves in the Isle of Leros, and await the occasion to return to Miletus. This early writer seems to have been one of those sagacious men who rarely obtain their proper influence in public affairs, because they address the reason in opposition to the passions of those they desire to lead. Unsuccessful in this proposition, Hecatæus had equally failed on two former occasions;—first, when he had attempted to dissuade the Milesians from the revolt of Aristagoras; secondly, when, finding them bent upon it, he advised them to appropriate the sacred treasures in the temple at Branchidæ to the maintenance of a naval force. On each occasion his advice failed precisely because given without prejudice or passion. The successful adviser must appear to sympathize even with the errors of his audience.

BOOK II. CHAP. IV. B.C. 497.

he was suddenly, with his whole force, cut off by an incursion of the Thracian foe. So perished the author of many subsequent and mighty events, and who, the more we regard his craft, his courage, his perseverance, and activity, the vastness of his ends, and the perseverance with which he pursued them, must be regarded by the historian as one of the most stirring and remarkable spirits of that enterprising age.

IX. The people of Miletus had not, upon light grounds or with feeble minds, embarked in the perilous attempt to recover their liberties. Deep was the sentiment that inspired—solemn and stern the energy which supported them. The Persian generals now collected in one body their native and auxiliary force. The Cyprians, B.C. 496. lately subdued, were compelled to serve. Egypt and Cilicia swelled the armament, and the skill of the Phœnicians rendered yet more formidable a fleet of six hundred vessels. With this power the Barbarians advanced upon Miletus. Most, if not all, of the Ionian states prepared themselves for the struggle—delegates met at the Panionium—it was agreed to shun the Persians upon land—to leave to the Milesians the defence of their city—to equip the utmost naval force they could command—and, assembling in one fleet off the small isle of Ladé, opposite to Miletus, to hazard the

battle upon the seas. Three hundred and fifty triremes were provided, and met at the appointed place. The discipline of the navy was not equal to the valour of the enterprise; Dionysius, commander of the Phocæans, attempted, perhaps too rigorously, to enforce it;—jealousy and disgust broke out amongst the troops—and the Samian leaders, whether displeased with their allies, or tempted by the Persians, who, through the medium of the exiled tyrants of Greece, serving with them, maintained correspondence with the Ionians, secretly agreed to desert in the midst of the ensuing battle. This compact made, the Phœnicians commenced the attack, and the Ionians, unsuspicious of treachery, met them with a contracted line. In the beginning of the engagement, the Samians, excepting only eleven ships, (whose captains were afterwards rewarded by a public column in their native market-place,) fulfilled their pledge, and sailed away to Samos. The Lesbians, stationed next them, followed their example, and confusion and flight became contagious. The Chians alone redeemed the character of the allies, aided, indeed, by Dionysius the Phocæan, who, after taking three of the enemy's ships, refused to retreat till the day was gone, and then, sailing to Phœnicia, sunk several trading vessels, enriched himself

BOOK II. CHAP. IV. with their spoil, and eventually reaching Sicily, became renowned as a pirate, formidable to the Carthaginian and Tyrsenian families of the old Phœnician foe, but holding his Grecian countrymen sacred from his depredations.

The Persian armament now bent all its vengeance on Miletus; they besieged it both by land and by sea—every species of military machine then known was directed against its walls, and, in the sixth year after the revolt of Aristagoras, Miletus fell—Miletus, the capital of Ionia —the mother of a hundred colonies! Pittacus, Thales, Arctinus, were among the great names she gave to science and to song. Worthy of her renown, she fell amidst the ruins of that freedom which she showed how nobly she could have continued to adorn by proving how sternly she could defend. The greater part of the citizens were slain—those who remained, with the women and the children, were borne into slavery by the victors. Their valour and renown touched the heart of Darius, and he established the captives in a city by that part of the Erythræan sea which receives the waters of the Barbarian Tigris. Their ancient territories were portioned out between the Persians and the Carians of Pedasa.

B.C. 494.

X. The Athenians received the news of this

fatal siege with the deepest sorrow, and Herodotus records an anecdote illustrative of the character of that impassioned people, and interesting to the history of their early letters. Phrynichus, a disciple of Thespis, represented on the stage the capture of Miletus, and the whole audience burst into tears. The art of the poet was considered criminal in thus forcibly reminding the Athenians of a calamity which was deemed their own: he was fined a thousand drachmæ, and the repetition of the piece forbidden—a punishment that was but a glorious homage to the genius of the poet, and the sensibility of the people.

After innumerable adventures, in which he exhibited considerable but perverted abilities, Histiæus fell into the hands of Artaphernes, and died upon the cross. Darius rebuked the zeal of the satrap, and lamented the death of a man, whose situation, perhaps, excused his artifices.

And now the cloud swept onward—one after one the Ionian cities were reduced—the islands of Chios, Lesbos, Tenedos, depopulated; and all Ionia subjugated and enslaved. The Persian fleet proceeded to subdue all the towns and territories to the left of the Hellespont. At this time their success in the Chersonesus drove from that troubled isthmus a chief, whose acute

BOOK II. CHAP. IV. and dauntless faculties made him subsequently the scourge of Persia, and the deliverer of Greece.

XI. We have seen Miltiades, nephew to the first of that name, arrive at the Chersonesus—by a stroke of dexterous perfidy seize the persons of the neighbouring chieftains—attain the sovereignty of that peninsula, and marry the daughter of a Thracian prince. In his character was united, with much of the intellect, all the duplicity, of the Greek. During the war between Darius and the Scythians, while affecting to follow the Persian army, he had held traitorous intercourse with the foe, and proposed to the Grecian chiefs to destroy the bridge of boats across the Danube confided to their charge; so that, what with the force of the Scythians and the pressure of famine, the army of Darius would have perished amongst the Scythian wastes, and a mighty enemy have been lost to Greece—a scheme that, but for wickedness, would have been wise. With all his wiles, and all his dishonesty, Miltiades had the art, not only of rendering authority firm, but popular. Driven from his state by the Scythian Nomades, he was voluntarily recalled by the very subjects over whom he had established an armed sovereignty—a rare occurrence in that era of Re-

publics. Surrounded by fierce and restless foes, and exercised in constant if petty warfare, Miltiades had acquired as much the experience of camps as the subtleties of Grecian diplomacy; yet, like many of the wise of small states, he seems to have been more crafty than rash—the first for flight wherever flight was the better policy—but the first for battle if battle were the more prudent. He had in him none of the inconsiderate enthusiasm of the hero—none of the blind but noble subservience to honour. Valour seems to have been for his profound intellect but the summation of chances, and when we afterwards find him the most daring soldier, it is only because he was the acutest calculator.

On seeing the Phœnician fleet, under Persia, arrive off the Isle of Tenedos, which is opposite the Chersonesus, Miltiades resolved not to wait the issue of a battle; as before he had fled the Scythian, so now, without a struggle, he succumbed to the Phœnician, sword. He loaded five vessels with his property—with four he eluded the hostile fleet—the fifth, commanded by his eldest son, was pursued and taken.* In

* The humane Darius—whose virtues were his own, his faults of his station—treated the son of Miltiades with kindness and respect, married him to a Persian woman, and endowed him with an estate. It was the habitual policy of that great king to attach to his dominions the valour and the intellect of the Greeks.

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triumphant safety the chief of the Chersonesus arrived at Athens. He arrived at that free state to lose the dignity of a Thracian prince, and suddenly to be reminded that he was an Athenian citizen. He was immediately prosecuted for the crime of tyranny. His influence or his art, admiration of his genius, or compassion of his reverses, however, procured him an acquittal. We may well suppose that, high-born and wealthy, he lost no occasion of cementing his popularity in his native state.

XII. Meanwhile, the Persians suspended for that year all further hostilities against the Ionians. Artaphernes endeavoured to conciliate the subdued colonies by useful laws, impartial taxes, and benign recommendation to order and to peace. The next year, however, that satrap was recalled, and Mardonius, a very young noble, the son-in-law of Darius, was appointed, at the head of a considerable naval and military force, to the administration of the affairs in that part of the Persian empire. Entering Ionia, he executed a novel, a daring, but no unstatesmanlike stroke of policy. He removed all the Ionian tyrants, and everywhere restored republican forms of government; deeming, unquestionably, that he is the securest master of distant provinces who establishes amongst them the institutions which they best

B.C. 492.

love. Then proceeding to the Hellespont, Mardonius collected his mighty fleets and powerful army, and passed through Europe towards the avowed objects of the Persian vengeance—the cities of Eretria and Athens.

From the time that the Athenians had assisted the forces of Miletus and Ionia in the destruction of Sardis, their offence had rankled deep in the bosom of Darius. Like most monarchs, he viewed as more heinous offenders the foreign abettors of rebellion, than the rebels themselves. Religion, no doubt, conspired to augment his indignation. In the conflagration of Sardis the temple of the great Persian deity had perished, and the inexpiated sacrilege made a duty of revenge. So keenly indeed did Darius resent the share that the remote Athenians had taken in the destruction of his Lydian capital, that on receiving the intelligence, he is said to have called for his bow, and shooting an arrow in the air, to have prayed for vengeance against the offenders; and three times every day, as he sate at table, his attendants were commanded to repeat to him, "Sir, remember the Athenians."

XIII. But the design of Mardonius was not only directed against the Athenians and the state of Eretria, it extended also to the rest of Greece: preparations so vast were not meant

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to be wasted upon foes apparently insignificant, but rather to consolidate the Persian conquests on the Asiatic coasts, and to impress on the neighbouring continent of Europe adequate conceptions of the power of the Great King. By sea, Mardonius subdued the islanders of Thasus; wealthy in its golden mines; by land, he added to the Persian dependencies in Thrace and Macedonia. But losses, both by storm and battle, drove him back to Asia, and delayed for a season the deliberate and organized invasion of Greece.

In the following year, while the tributary cities Mardonius had subdued were employed in constructing vessels of war and transports for cavalry, ambassadors were despatched by Darius to the various states of Greece, demanding the
B.C. 491. homage of earth and water—a preliminary calculated to ascertain who would resist, who submit to, his power—and certain to afford a pretext, in the one case for empire, in the other for invasion. Many of the cities of the continent, and all the islands visited by the ambassadors, had the timidity to comply with the terms imposed. Sparta and Athens, hitherto at variance, united at once in a haughty and indignant refusal. To so great a height was the popular rage in either state aroused by the very demand, that the Spartans threw

the ambassadors into their wells, and the Athenians, into their pit of punishment, bidding them thence get their earth and water: a singular coincidence of excess in the two states—to be justified by no pretence—to be extenuated only by the reflection, that liberty ever becomes a species of noble madness when menaced by foreign danger.*

XIV. With the rest of the islanders, the people of Ægina, less resolute than their near neighbours and ancient foes, the Athenians, acceded to the proposal of tribute. This, more than the pusillanimity of the other states, alarmed and inflamed the Athenians; they suspected that the Æginetans had formed some hostile alliance against them with the Persians, and hastened to accuse them to Sparta of betraying the liberties of Greece. Nor was there slight ground for the suspicions of the Athenians against Ægina. The people of that island had hereditary and bitter feuds with the Athenians, dating almost from their independence of their parent state of Epidaurus; mercantile jealousies were added to ancestral enmity, and the wares of Athens were forbidden

* Pausanias says, that Talthybius afterwards razed the house of Miltiades because that chief instigated the Athenians to the execution of the Persian envoys.

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all application to sacred uses in Ægina. We have seen the recent occasion on which Attica was invaded by these hostile neighbours, then allied with Thebes; and at that period the naval force of Ægina was such as to exceed the unconscious and untried resources of the Athenians. The latter had thus cause at once to hate and to dread a rival placed by nature in so immediate a vicinity to themselves, that the submission of Ægina to the Persian seemed in itself sufficient for the destruction of Athens.

XV. The Athenian ambassadors met with the most favourable reception at Sparta. The sense of their common danger, and sympathy in their mutual courage, united at once these rival states; even the rash, and hitherto unrelenting Cleomenes, eagerly sought a reconciliation with his former foe. That prince went in person to Ægina, determined to ascertain the authors of the suspected treachery;—with that characteristic violence which he never provided the means to support, and which so invariably stamps this unable and headstrong Spartan, as one who would have been a fool, if he had not been a madman—Cleomenes endeavoured to seize the persons of the accused. He was stoutly resisted, and disgracefully baffled, in this impotent rashness; and his fellow king, Demaratus, whom we remember to have suddenly

deserted Cleomenes at Eleusis, secretly connived with the Æginetans in their opposition to his colleague, and furnished them with an excuse, by insinuating that Cleomenes had been corrupted by the Athenians. But Demaratus was little aware of the dark and deadly passions which Cleomenes combined with his constitutional insanity. Revenge made a great component of his character, and the Grecian history records few instances of a nature more vehemently vindictive.

There had been various rumours at Sparta respecting the legitimacy of Demaratus. Cleomenes entered into a secret intrigue with a kinsman of his colleague, named Leotychides, who cherished an equal hatred against Demaratus;* the conditions between them were, that Cleomenes should assist in raising Leotychides to the throne of Demaratus, and Leotychides should assist Cleomenes in his vengeance against Ægina. No sooner was this conspiracy agreed upon than Leotychides propagated everywhere the report that the birth of Demaratus was spurious. The Spartans attached the greatest value

* Demaratus had not only prevented the marriage of Leotychides with a maiden named Percalos, but by a mixture of violence and artifice married her himself. Thus, even among the sober and unloving Spartans, woman could still be the author of revolutions.

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to legitimacy,—they sent to consult the Pythian —and Cleomenes, through the aid of Colon, a powerful citizen of Delphi, bribed the oracle to assert the illegitimacy of his foe. Demaratus

B.C.491. was deposed. Sinking at once into the rank of a private citizen, he was elected to some inferior office. His enemy, Leotychides, now upon his throne, sent him, by way of insult, a message to demand which he preferred—his past or his present dignity. Demaratus was stung, and answered, that the question might fix the date of much weal or much woe to Sparta ; saying this, he veiled his head—sought his home—sacrificed to Jupiter—and solemnly adjured his mother to enlighten him as to his legitimacy. The parental answer was far from unequivocal, and the matron appeared desirous of imputing the distinction of his birth to the shade of an ancient Spartan hero, Astrobachus, rather than to the earthly embrace of her husband. Demaratus heard, and formed his decision: he escaped from Sparta, baffled his pursuers, and fled into Asia, where he was honourably received and largely endowed by the beneficent Darius.

XVI. Leotychides, elected to the regal dignity, accompanied Cleomenes to Ægina : the people of that isle yielded to the authority they could not effectually resist; and ten of their

most affluent citizens were surrendered as hostages to Athens. But, in the meanwhile, the collusion of Cleomenes with the oracle was discovered—the priestess was solemnly deposed—and Cleomenes dreaded the just indignation of his countrymen. He fled to Thessaly, and thence passing among the Arcadians, he endeavoured to bind that people by the darkest oaths to take arms against his native city—so far could hatred stimulate a man consistent only in his ruling passion of revenge. But the mighty power of Persia now lowering over Lacedæmon, the Spartan citizens resolved to sacrifice even justice to discretion; it was not a time to distract their forces by new foes, and they invited Cleomenes back to Sparta, with the offer of his former station. He returned, but his violent career, happily for all, was now closed; his constitutional madness, no longer confined to doubtful extravagance, burst forth into incontrollable excess. He was put under confinement, and obtaining a sword from a Helot, who feared to disobey his commands, he deliberately destroyed himself—not by one wound, but slowly gashing the flesh from his limbs until he gradually ascended to the nobler and more mortal parts. This ferocious suicide excited universal horror, and it was generally deemed the divine penalty of his

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numerous and sacrilegious crimes: the only dispute among the Greeks was, to which of his black offences the wrath of heaven was the most justly due.*

XVII. No sooner did the news of this suicide reach the Æginetans than those proud and wealthy islanders sought, by an embassy to Sparta to regain their hostages yet detained at Athens. With the death of Cleomenes, the anger of Sparta against Ægina suddenly ceased—or, rather, we must suppose that a new party, in fellowship with the Æginetan oligarchy, came into power. The Spartans blamed Leotychides for his co-operation with Cleomenes; they even offered to give him up to the Æginetans—and it was finally agreed that he should accompany the ambassadors of Ægina to Athens, and insist on the surrender of the hostages. But the Athenians had now arrived at that spirit of independence, when nor the deadly bows of Persia, nor the iron sword of Sparta, nor the treacherous hostilities of their nearest neighbour, could quell their courage or subdue their pride. They disre-

* The national pride of the Spartans would not, however, allow that their king was the object of the anger of the gods, and ascribing his excesses to his madness, accounted for the last by a habit of excessive drinking, which he had acquired from the Scythians.

garded the presence and the orations of Leoty- BOOK II.
chides, and peremptorily refused to surrender their CHAP.
hostages. Hostilities between Ægina and Athens IV.
were immediately renewed. The Æginetans
captured the sacred vessel then stationed at
Sunium, in which several of the most eminent B.C. 491.
Athenians were embarked for the festival of
Apollo; nor could the sanctity of the voyage
preserve the captives from the ignominy of irons.
The Athenians resolved upon revenge, and a
civil dissension in Ægina placed it in their
power. An Æginetan traitor, named Nicodro-
mus, offered them his assistance, and aided by
the popular party opposed to the oligarchical
government, he seized the citadel. With twenty
ships from Corinth, and fifty of their own, the
Athenians invaded Ægina; but having been de-
layed in making the adequate preparations, they
arrived a day later than had been stipulated.
Nicodromus fled; the oligarchy restored, took
signal and barbarous vengeance upon such of
their insurgent countrymen as fell into their
hands. Meanwhile, the Athenian fleet obtained
a victory at sea, and the war still continued.

XVIII. While, seemingly unconscious of greater dangers, Athens thus practised her rising energies against the little island of Ægina, thrice every day the servants of the Persian

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king continued to exclaim, "Sir, remember the Athenians!"* The traitor, Hippias, constantly about the person of the courteous monarch, never failed to stimulate still farther his vengeance by appealing to his ambition. At length, Darius resolved no longer to delay the accomplishment of his designs. He recalled Mardonius, whose energy, indeed, had not been proportioned to his powers, and appointed two other generals—Datis, a native of the warlike Media, and Artaphernes, his own nephew, son to the former satrap of that name. These were expressly ordered to march at once against Eretria and Athens. And Hippias, now broken in frame, advanced in age,† and after an exile of twenty years, accompanied the Persian army—sanguine of success, and grasping, at the verge of life, the shadow of his former sceptre.

* Herod. l. 6, c. 94. † Ibid. l. 6, c. 107.

CHAPTER V.

THE PERSIAN GENERALS ENTER EUROPE—INVASION OF NAXOS, CARYSTUS, ERETRIA—THE ATHENIANS DEMAND THE AID OF SPARTA—THE RESULT OF THEIR MISSION AND THE ADVENTURE OF THEIR MESSENGER—THE PERSIANS ADVANCE TO MARATHON—THE PLAIN DESCRIBED—DIVISION OF OPINION IN THE ATHENIAN CAMP—THE ADVICE OF MILTIADES PREVAILS—THE DREAM OF HIPPIAS—THE BATTLE OF MARATHON.

I. On the Cilician coast the Persian armament encamped—thence, in a fleet of six hundred triremes, it sailed to Samos—passed through the midst of the clustering Cyclades, and along that part of the Ægæan sea called 'the Icarian,' from the legendary fate of the son of Dædalus—invaded Naxos—burnt her town and temples, and sparing the sacred Delos, in which the Median Datis reverenced the traditionary birthplace of two deities analogous to those most honoured in the Persian creed*—awed into subjection the various isles, until it arrived at Eubœa, divided but by a strait from Attica, and

BOOK II. CHAP. V. B.C. 490.

* The Sun and Moon.

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containing the city of the Eretrians. The fleet first assailed Carystus, whose generous citizens refused both to aid against their neighbours, and to give hostages for their conduct. Closely besieged, and their lands wasted, they were compelled, however, to surrender to the Persians. Thence the victorious armament passed to Eretria. The Athenians had sent to the relief of that city the four thousand colonists whom they had established in the island—but fear, jealousy, division, were within the walls. Ruin seemed certain, and a chief of the Eretrians urged the colonists to quit a city which they were unable to save. They complied with the advice, and reached Attica in safety. Eretria, however, withstood a siege of six days; on the seventh the city was betrayed to the Barbarians by two of that fatal oligarchical party, who in every Grecian city seem to have considered no enemy so detestable as the majority of their own citizens; the place was pillaged—the temples burned—the inhabitants enslaved. Here the Persians rested for a few days ere they embarked for Attica.

II. Unsupported and alone, the Athenians were not dismayed. A swift-footed messenger was despatched to Sparta, to implore its prompt assistance. On the day after his departure from Athens, he reached his destination, went

straight to the assembled magistrates, and thus addressed them :— BOOK II. CHAP. V.

"Men of Lacedæmon, the Athenians supplicate your aid; suffer not the most ancient of the Grecian cities to be enslaved by the Barbarian. Already Eretria is subjected to their yoke, and all Greece is diminished by the loss of that illustrious city."

The resource the Athenians had so much right to expect failed them. The Spartans indeed, resolved to assist Athens, but not until assistance would have come too late. They declared that their religion forebade them to commence a march till the moon was at her full, and this was only the ninth day of the month.* With this unsatisfying reply, the messenger returned to Athens. But employed in this arduous enterprise—his imagination inflamed by the greatness of the danger—and its workings yet more kindled by the loneliness of his adventure and the mountain stillness of the

* In his attack upon Herodotus, Plutarch asserts that the Spartans *did* make numerous military excursions at the beginning of the month; if this be true, so far from excusing the Spartans, it only corroborates the natural suspicion that they acted in accordance, not with superstition, but with their usual calculating and selfish policy—ever as slow to act in the defence of other states, as prompt to assert the independence of their own.

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places through which he passed, the Athenian messenger related, on his return, a vision less probably the creation of his invention than of his excited fancy. Passing over the Mount Parthenius, amidst whose wild recesses gloomed the antique grove dedicated to Telephus, the son of Hercules,* the Athenian heard a voice call to him aloud, and started to behold that mystic god, to whom, above the rest of earth, were dedicated the hills and woods of Arcady,—the Pelasgic Pan. The god bade him "ask at Athens why the Athenians forgot his worship—he who loved them well—and might yet assist them at their need."

Such was the tale of the messenger. The lively credulities of the people believed its truth, and in calmer times dedicated a temple to the deity, venerated him with annual sacrifices, and the race of torches.

III. While the Athenians listened to the dreams of this poetical superstition, the mighty thousands of the Mede and Persian landed on the Attic coast, and, conducted by Hippias among their leaders, marched to the plain of Marathon, which the traveller still beholds stretching wide and level, amidst hills and marshes, at the distance of only ten miles from the gates of Athens. Along the

* Paus. l. 8, c. 5.

shore the plain extends to the length of six miles—inland it exceeds two. He who surveys it now, looks over a dreary waste, whose meagre and arid herbage is relieved but by the scanty foliage of unfrequent shrubs or pear trees, and a few dwarf pines drooping towards the sea. Here and there may be seen the grazing buffalo, or the peasant bending at his plough :—a distant roof, a ruined chapel, are not sufficient evidences of the living to interpose between the imagination of the spectator and the dead. Such is the present Marathon—we are summoned back to the past.

IV. It will be remembered that the Athenians were divided into ten tribes at the instigation of Clisthenes. Each of these tribes nominated a general; there were therefore ten leaders to the Athenian army. Amongst them was Miltiades, who had succeeded in ingratiating himself with the Athenian people, and obtained from their suffrages a command.*

* The exact number of the Athenians is certainly doubtful. Herodotus does not specify it. Justin estimates the number of *citizens* at ten thousand, besides a thousand Platæans: Nepos at ten thousand in all; Pausanias at nine thousand. But this total, furnished by authorities so equivocal, seems incredibly small. The free population could have been little short of twenty thousand. We must add the num-

Aided by a thousand men from Platæa, then on terms of intimate friendship with the Athenians, the little army marched from the city, and advanced to the entrance of the plain of Marathon. Here they arrayed themselves in martial order, near the temple of Hercules, to the east of the hills that guard the upper part of the valley. Thus encamped, and in sight of the gigantic power of the enemy, darkening the long expanse that skirts the sea, divisions broke out among the leaders;—some contended that a battle was by no means to be risked with such inferior forces—others, on the contrary, were for giving immediate battle. Of this latter

bers, already great, of the resident aliens and the slaves, who, as Pausanias tells us, were then for the first time admitted to military service. On the other hand, it is evident from the speech of Miltiades to Callimachus, and the supposed treachery of the Alcmæonidæ, that some, nor an inconsiderable, force, was left in reserve at Athens for the protection of the city. Let us suppose, however, that two-thirds of the Athenian citizens of military age, viz. between the age of twenty and sixty, marched to Marathon, (and this was but the common proportion on common occasions,) the total force, with the slaves, the settlers, and the Platæan auxiliaries, could not amount to less than fifteen or sixteen thousand. But whatever the precise number of the heroes of Marathon, we have ample testimony for the general fact that it was so trifling when compared with the Persian armament, as almost to justify the exaggeration of later writers.

advice was Miltiades—he was supported by a man already of high repute, though now first presented to our notice, and afterwards destined to act a great and splendid part in the drama of his times. Aristides was one of the generals of the army,* and strenuously co-operated with Miltiades in the policy of immediate battle.

Despite, however, the military renown of the one, and the civil eminence of the other, the opposite and more tame opinion seemed likely to prevail, when Miltiades suddenly thus addressed the Polemarch Callimachus. That magistrate, the third of the nine archons, was held by virtue of his office equal in dignity to the military leaders, and to him was confided the privilege of a casting vote.

"On you, Callimachus," said the chief of the Chersonese—"on you it rests, whether Athens shall be enslaved, or whether from age to age your country, freed by your voice, shall retain in yours a name dearer to her even than those of Aristogiton and Harmodius.† Never since

* Plut. in Vit. Aris. Aristid. pro Quatuor Vias, vol. ii. p. 322, edit. Dindorf.

† In his graceful work on Athens and Attica, Mr. Wordsworth has well observed the peculiar propriety of this reference to the examples of Harmodius and Aristogiton, as ad-

BOOK II. CHAP. V. the foundation of Athens was she placed in so imminent a peril. If she succumb to the Mede, she is rendered again to the tyranny of Hippias —but if she conquer, she may rise to the first eminence amongst the states of Greece. How this may be accomplished, and how upon your decision rests the event, I will at once explain. The sentiments of our leaders are divided—these are for instant engagement, those for procrastination. Depend upon it, if we delay, some sedition, some tumult will break out amongst the Athenians, and may draw a part of them to favour the Medes; but if we engage at once, and before a single dissension takes from us a single man, we may, if the gods give us equal fortune, obtain the victory. Consider the alternative—our decision depends on you."

V. The arguments of Miltiades convinced Callimachus, who knew well the many divisions of the city, the strength which Hippias and the Pisistratidæ still probably possessed within its walls, and who could not but allow that a superior force becomes ever more fearful the more deliberately it is regarded. He interposed his authority. It was decided to give battle. Each general commanded in turn his single day. When it came

dressed to Callimachus. They were from the same borough (Aphidnæ) as the Polemarch himself.

to the turn of Aristides, he gave up his right to Miltiades, showing his colleagues that it was no disgrace to submit to the profound experience of another. The example once set was universally followed, and Miltiades was thus left in absolute and undivided command. But that able and keen-sighted chief, fearing perhaps that if he took from another his day of command, jealousy might damp the ardour of the general thus deprived, and, as it were, degraded, waited till his own appointed day before he commenced the attack.

VI. On the night before Hippias conducted the Barbarians to the plains of Marathon, he is said to have dreamt a dream. He thought he was with his mother! In the fondness of human hopes he interpreted the vision favourably, and flattered himself that he should regain his authority, and die in his own house of old age. The morning now arrived that was to attest the veracity of his interpretation.

VII. To the left of the Athenians was a low chain of hills, clothed with trees, (and which furnished them timber to break the charge of the Persian horse,)—to their right a torrent;—their front was long, for to render it more imposing in extent, and to prevent being out-flanked by the Persian numbers, the centre ranks were

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left weak and shallow, but on either wing the troops were drawn up more solidly and strong. Callimachus, the Polemarch, commanded the right wing—the Platæans formed the left. They had few, if any, horsemen or archers. The details which we possess of their arms and military array, if not in this, in other engagements of the same period, will complete the picture. We may behold them clad in bright armour, well-proof and tempered, which covered breast and back—the greaves, so often mentioned by Homer, were still retained—their helmets were wrought and crested, the cones mostly painted in glowing colours, and the plumage of feathers or horse-hair rich and waving, in proportion to the rank of the wearer. Broad, sturdy, and richly ornamented, were their bucklers—the pride and darling of their arms, the loss of which was the loss of honour; their spears were ponderous, thick, and long—a chief mark of contra-distinction from the slight shaft of Persia—and, with their short broadsword, constituted their main weapons of offence. No Greek army marched to battle without vows, and sacrifice, and prayer—and now, in the stillness of the pause, the soothsayers examined the entrails of the victims—they were propitious, and Callimachus solemnly vowed to Diana a victim for the slaugh-

ter of every foe. Loud broke the trumpets*—the standards wrought with the sacred bird of Athens were raised on high ;†—it was the signal of battle—and the Athenians rushed with an impetuous vehemence upon the Persian power. "The first Greeks of whom I have heard," says the simple Halicarnassean, "who ever *ran* to attack a foe—the first, too, who ever beheld without dismay the garb and armour of the Medes ; for hitherto in Greece the very name of Mede had excited terror."

VIII. When the Persian army, with its numerous horse, animal as well as man protected by plates of mail‡—its expert bowmen—its lines and deep files of turbaned-soldiers, gorgeous with many a blazing standard,§—headed by leaders well hardened, despite their gay garbs and adorned breast-plates, in many a more even field ;—when, I say, this force beheld the Athenians rushing towards them, they considered them, thus few, and destitute alike of cavalry and archers,‖ as madmen hurrying to destruc-

* The goddess of Athens was supposed to have invented a peculiar trumpet used by her favoured votaries.

† To raise the standard was the sign of battle.—Suidas, Thucyd. Schol. c. 1. On the Athenian standard was depicted the owl of Minerva. Plut. in Vit. Lysand.

‡ Æschyl. Persæ. § Æschyl. Persæ.

‖ Herod. l. 6. c. xii.

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tion. But it was evidently not without deliberate calculation that Miltiades had so commenced the attack. The warlike experience of his Guerilla life had taught him to know the foe against whom he fought. To volunteer the assault was to forestall and cripple the charge of the Persian horse—besides, the long lances, the heavy arms, the hand-to-hand valour of the Greeks, must have been no light encounter to the more weakly mailed and less formidably-armed infantry of the East. Accustomed themselves to give the charge, it was a novelty and a disadvantage to receive it. Long, fierce, and stubborn was the battle. The centre wing of the Barbarians, composed of the Sacians and the pure Persian race, at length pressed hard upon the shallow centre of the Greeks, drove them back into the country, and, eager with pursuit, left their own wings to the charge of Callimachus on the one side, and the Plataean forces on the other. The brave Polemarch, after the most signal feats of valour, fell fighting in the field; but his troops, undismayed, smote on with spear and sword. The Barbarians retreated backward to the sea, where swamps and marshes encumbered their movements, and here (though the Athenians did not pursue them far) the greater portion were slain, hemmed in

by the morasses, and probably ridden down by their own disordered cavalry. Meanwhile, the two tribes that had formed the centre, one of which was commanded by Aristides,* retrieved themselves with a mighty effort, and the two wings, having routed their antagonists, now inclining towards each other, intercepted the Barbarian centre, which, thus attacked, front and rear, (large trees felled and scattered over the plain, obstructing the movements of their cavalry,) was defeated with prodigious slaughter. Evening came on :†—confused and disorderly, the Persians now only thought of flight: the whole army retired to their ships, hard chased by the Grecian victors, who amidst the carnage fired the fleet. Cynægirus, brother to Æschylus, the tragic poet, (himself highly distinguished for his feats that day,) seized one of the vessels by the poop: his hand was severed by an axe ;—he died gloriously of his wounds. But to none did the fortunes of that field open a more illustrious career than to a youth of the tribe Leontis, in whom, though probably then but a simple soldier in the ranks, was first made manifest the nature and the genius destined to command. The name of that youth was Themisto-

* Plut. in. Vit. Aristid.

† Πρὸς ἑσπέρα. Aristoph. Vesp. 1080.

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cles.* Seven vessels were captured—six thousand four hundred of the Barbarians fell in the field—the Athenians and their brave ally lost only one hundred and ninety-two; but amongst them perished many of their bravest nobles. It was a superstition not uncharacteristic of that imaginative people, and evincing how greatly their ardour was aroused, that many of them (according to Plutarch) fancied they beheld the gigantic shade of their ancestral Theseus, completely armed, and bearing down before them upon the foe.

So perished the hopes of the unfortunate Hippias;—obscure and inglorious in his last hour, the exiled prince fell confounded amidst the general slaughter.†

IX. Despite the capture of some vessels, and the conflagration of others, the Persians still retained a considerable fleet, and, succeeding in boarding their Eretrian plunder, (which they had left on the Eubœan Isle,) they passed thence the Promontory of Sunium, with the intention of circumventing the Athenians, and arriving at Athens before them—a design which it was supposed they were induced to form by the

* Justin, lib. ii. c. xi.

† According, however, to Suidas, he escaped and died at Lemnos.

treachery of some one, suspected, without sufficient proof, to belong to the house of the Alcmæonids, who held up a shield as a signal to the Persians while they were under sail.* But the Athenians were under a prompt and vigilant commander, and while the Barbarian fleet doubled the Cape of Sunium, they reached their city, and effectually prevented the designs of the foe. Aristides, with the tribe under his command was left on the field to guard the prisoners and the booty, and his scrupulous honesty was evinced by his jealous care over the scattered and uncounted treasure.† The painter of the nobler schools might find perhaps few subjects worthier of his art than Aristides watching at night amidst the torches of his men over the plains of Marathon, in sight of the blue Ægæan no longer crowded with the Barbarian masts;—and near the white columns of the temple of Hercules, beside which the Athenians had pitched their camp.

The Persian fleet anchored off Phalerum, the Athenian harbour, and remaining there, me-

* This incident confirms the expressed fear of Miltiades that delay in giving battle might produce division and treachery among some of the Athenians. Doubtless his speech referred to some particular faction or individuals.

† Plut. in Vit. Arist.

nacing but inactive, a short time, sailed back to Asia.

X. The moon had passed her full, when two thousand Spartans arrived at Athens: the battle was over and the victory won; but so great was their desire to see the bodies of the formidable Medes, that they proceeded to Marathon, and returning to Athens, swelled the triumph of her citizens by their applause and congratulations.

XI. The marble which the Persians had brought with them, in order to erect as a trophy of the victory they anticipated, was, at a subsequent period, wrought by Phidias into a statue of Nemesis. A picture of the battle, representing Miltiades in the foremost place, and solemnly preserved in public, was deemed no inadequate reward to that great captain; and yet, conspicuous above the level plain of Marathon, rises a long barrow, fifteen feet in height, the supposed sepulchre of the Athenian heroes. Still does a romantic legend, not unfamiliar with our traditions of the north, give a supernatural terror to the spot. Nightly along the plain are yet heard by superstition, the neighings of chargers, and the rushing shadows of spectral war.* And still, throughout the civilised

* These apparitions, recorded by Pausanias, l. 1. c. 33, are still believed in by the peasantry.

world, (civilised how much by the arts and lore of Athens !) men of every clime, of every political persuasion, feel as Greeks at the name of Marathon. Later fields have presented the spectacle of an equal valour, and almost the same disparities of slaughter ; but never, in the annals of earth, were united so closely in our applause, admiration for the heroism of the victors, and sympathy for the holiness of their cause. It was the first great victory of OPINION ! and its fruits were reaped, not by Athens only, but by all Greece then, as by all time thereafter, in a mighty and imperishable harvest,—the invisible not less than the actual force of despotism was broken. Nor was it only that the dread which had hung upon the Median name was dispelled—nor that free states were taught their pre-eminence over the unwieldy empires which the Persian conquerors had destroyed,—a greater lesson was bestowed on Greece, when she discovered that the monarch of Asia could not force upon a petty state the fashion of its government, or the selection of its rulers. The defeat of Hippias was of no less value than that of Darius ; and the same blow which struck down the foreign invader, smote also the hopes of domestic tyrants.

One successful battle for liberty quickens and

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exalts that proud and emulous spirit from which are called forth the civilisation and the arts that liberty should produce, more rapidly than centuries of repose. To Athens the victory of Marathon was a second Solon.

END OF BOOK II. AND VOL. I.

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